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The grace of life

The Grace of Life

A SERIES OF SHORT PAPERS
ON PRACTICAL RELIGION
FOR BUSY PEOPLE

BY
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RECTOR OF WINTERBOURNE BASSETT

"Heirs together of the grace of life."--1 ST. PETER iii. 7

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE following papers were written for *The Churchman* (New York), and were addressed in the first instance, as will be obvious, to American readers.

I have, however, ventured, with the kind consent of the proprietors of *The Churchman*, to reprint them, not because they deal exhaustively or adequately with the different subjects, but because, taken together, they are intended to present a certain type of Churchmanship—a Churchmanship which, while studiously avoiding controversy and partisanship, seeks, amid the complex circumstances of modern life, to fulfil what Scripture calls *the mind of Christ*, and to follow the leading of His Spirit.

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PART I.

I.

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.

J. G. WHITTIER.

THERE are many definitions of religion, many different ideas of what it means and involves. But it is the mark of wisdom and common sense to go straight to the fountain-head. To the question, "What is a Christian?" we shall seek an answer in the life and teaching, the patience and the Passion, of Jesus Christ.

Of two things we may be sure: First, that to be a Christian is to be *Christ-like*, and that therefore everything depends, not on correct opinions about Christ, not on mere imitation of the outward features and circumstances of His life, but on conformity to what St. Paul calls His *mind*; on the

extent to which we have caught something of His spirit. Secondly, we know that we are made Christians outwardly; we are made, whether in infancy or manhood, members of the Christian Church, in order that we may become Christ-like in temper, behaviour, and character. The end and aim of all Church-life, all membership in the Christian brotherhood, is Christ-like living.

Speaking broadly, we meet, both in the Gospels and in the history of religion, with two opposed types of thought. There are those who, like the Pharisees, look upon religion as primarily a life of law and obligation. They regard the service of God mainly as a system of precepts, regulations, ordinances. To them goodness consists in a punctilious and faithful but anxious obedience to what they believe to be the requirements of Almighty God. But too often their service is without joy and their scrupulous obedience brings them no true peace. On the other hand, there are those who think of religion primarily as the life of Divine sonship. They feel themselves to be not merely servants, but children of a holy and compassionate Father. In their degree they share the confidence, the calmness, the sureness of filial instinct which they behold in Jesus Christ. In

Him they see the ideal of sonship: a life of toil for the good of men, but toil gladdened by perfect trust in the Fatherly goodness, and by perfect sympathy with the wise purposes, of God ; a life of whole-hearted devotion to God, overflowing in tenderness toward all that He has made ; a life of suffering and self-sacrifice brightened by the joy of sharing a Father's work, a Father's conflict, a Father's victory over evil.

Is it necessary to point out which of these two conceptions of religion comes nearest to the mind of Christ? Can we forget that He Himself sets in the forefront of His Gospel—His message of *good will towards men*—the truth of the Divine Fatherhood? And is it possible for a man to be a Christian without basing his whole conception of life, his thoughts of religion and his hopes for humanity, on this fundamental fact? *Pietas*, says an old Latin writer, *nihil aliud est quam Dei parentis agnitio*.

A Christian, then, is one who looks to Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, the Revealer of God's Fatherhood, as the true Pattern of manhood. What men ought to be, as the children of God, He is. But a Christian also looks to Christ as the Source of power to become, in actual fact as well

as in name, a child of God. The experience of all the Christian centuries is uttered in the words of St. John's Gospel : *As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.* What are the great outstanding characteristics of the true Christian—the truly Christ-like man ?

Perhaps the most conspicuous feature in the true Christian is vitality. He has life in larger measure than other men ; he is a living proof of the truth of Christ's promise, *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* Whatever the Christian undertakes—whether he is engaged in business, in trade, or in the work of some skilled profession—he fulfils his appointed task with zeal, energy, diligence, thoroughness. He knows that a heavenly Father has assigned him his task—*Son, go work to-day in My vineyard*—and that the simplest way of glorifying God is to work heartily as unto Him and not unto men. Fulness of energy, strength of purpose and conviction, wisely directed activity,—these are the traits most characteristic of a Christian.

But next, a Christian will ever have before his eyes the image of Him whose briefest biography is this : *He went about doing good.*¹ He will aim

¹ Acts x. 38.

at doing good up to the full measure of his opportunity. A man can do good, not only by works of mercy and beneficence, but by careful and conscientious administration of his business, by due consideration for those whom he employs, by keeping in view their claims as human beings and as children of God. And thus a Christian's work tends more and more to become work for the good of men carried on as in the sight of God. The love of man, the desire to do good, the readiness to seize opportunities of enriching and serving his fellows,—these are not the occasional impulses of a Christian, but his habitual aim and endeavour.

It follows that another note of the Christian character is willingness to spend and be spent for others, the spirit of self-sacrifice. There is another biography of Christ which tells us that even He *pleased not Himself*.¹ A man soon finds that the endeavour to live for God and to do good to others involves him in conflict, difficulty, suffering. No mere sentimental tenderness for poverty in all its manifold forms will stand the strain of disappointment, delay, opposition, which sooner or later tests all sincere efforts to raise and benefit

¹ Rom. xv. 3.

mankind. Christian love accordingly displays itself as fortitude, bearing, believing, hoping, enduring all things.¹ In its conflict with evil, in its battle against apathy and vice, in its steadfast witness for the cause of righteousness and truth, it is sustained by the example and help of Him who chose the life we are most habitually tempted to avoid—the life of toil, poverty, and pain, and who humbled Himself *even unto the death of the cross*. The Christian is prepared for many calls upon patience, faith, and courage in a world which rejected and crucified Christ.

And what is the secret of a life like this—a life rich and full, strenuous and earnest, a life of resolute energy and far-seeing endurance? The answer is that a Christian's secret strength lies in communion with his unseen Father, Guide, and Friend. His life, like his Master's, is one of prayer. He prays as Christ prayed—as one who seeks in all things to know and follow the will of God, who looks to God for the supply of every need, and seeks to discharge all tasks and obligations as *unto the Lord, and not unto men*. The habit of prayer is the secret of all that is most distinctively Christian—the unfailing hopefulness,

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

the calm patience, the fruitful activity, the freedom from harassing care and anxiety, which make a man "glad and free" in the service of God and men. In his recent work, *What is Christianity?* Professor Harnack finely remarks that "It is by their prayers that the character of the higher religions is determined;" and certainly the Lord's Prayer—the type of Christian prayer—was taught us by One who had overcome all "inner unrest." "It exhibits the steady faith of the man who knows that he is safe in God. . . . It shows the Gospel to be the Fatherhood of God applied to the whole of life." It breathes the peace of a heart which has found its repose and security, its strength to labour and its courage to endure, in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And finally, the habit of prayer is the secret of that love of truth which is characteristic of the Christ-like man. One who tries to live always in the presence of God will desire above all things to be true, to do the truth, to love and welcome truth, to seek it earnestly, to submit to it when apparent, *with an honest and good heart*, and with a teachable temper. Christian humility means the triumph of truth in the character; Christian candour is the passion for truth enkindling the intellect;

Christian reverence is the homage rendered to truth by the heart. For to a Christian, truth is no dead abstraction to be pursued and sought by the unaided reason of man, but a living power claiming the allegiance of that which is most central in him—his will ; disclosing itself gradually in response to man's honest obedience, and finally manifesting itself as the will and mind of a Person—of *Him who is true*, of Him who said, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*.

II.

SIMPLICITY IN RELIGION.

That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
Or decomposes but to recompose,
Become my universe that feels and knows !

R. BROWNING.

WHEN we say that religion means the life of friendship with God, we are using the actual language, we are giving expression to the essential spirit, of Scripture. For in all its statements about man's relation to God, the Bible speaks the language of common life. Our Lord Himself and the writers of the New Testament habitually employ imagery which tends powerfully to simplify men's conception of God. *God is Light, God is Love*, God is our *heavenly Father* ; Christians are His *dear children* ; they belong to His *family*, they are members of His *household* ; they make known to Him their simplest wants ; they ask of Him their *daily bread* ; they are His flock, and Jesus is *the*

Good Shepherd; their fellow-men everywhere are *brethren* and *little ones* of Christ, to be sought out, ministered to, or welcomed with rejoicing into the one home; there are means which God has devised *that His banished be not expelled from Him*.¹ Moreover, when Christ expounds in parables the mysteries of the kingdom of God, He finds similitudes in simple and common things, in everyday occurrences. It is with reason that Bishop Wilson, in his *Sacra Privata*, asks, "Can any man imitate a greater master of eloquence than Jesus Christ was, whose great excellence appears in making great truths understood by the meanest capacity?"

Simplicity in religion is the natural result of a steady grasp of these fundamental truths. We may belong to what are called the "educated" classes, learning much as life advances, gathering wide and fruitful experience from our contact with men, from travel, from our acquaintance with the world of business or politics. Study may have opened to us sides of life, or aspects of truth, which are hidden from the mass of mankind. The increase of knowledge or the bold ventures of speculation may have led us into regions of

¹ 2 Sam. xiv. 14.

thought where others cannot follow us, and so far we are isolated from our fellows and tempted perhaps to think lightly of common and ordinary habits of thought. Or, again, the complexity of life's manifold claims and problems may have confused and entangled us ; old habits of sin and old faults of character may have plunged us in spiritual darkness and difficulty. But God is everywhere, standing in an unchanging relationship of love and righteousness to His creatures. With Him is *no variableness, neither shadow of turning*.¹ And life, with its oft-repeated calls to recollection, to repentance, to conversion, to advance, is our chance of becoming simple as God is simple—

For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear,—believe the aged friend,—
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is ;
And that we hold thenceforth to the uttermost
Such prize despite the envy of the world,
And, having gained truth, keep truth : that is all.²

In a word, what we have to attain, or to recover if lost, is that simple view of life, those elemental thoughts of God which most men leave behind

¹ St. James i. 17.

² R. Browning, *A Death in the Desert*.

with childhood, but which some, like St. John, carry with them unclouded into the light that lies beyond death.

We should aim, then, at simplicity ; first, in our ideas of God. God Himself is the most simple of all Beings. "*He is* means always the same thing, namely, *He loves*. He is Spirit, not spiritual ; Life, not a living Being ; Truth, not a truthful Person ; Love, not merely a Person capable of loving."¹ Thus simplicity in our conception of God comes from the thought of Him as ever responding to the heart's deepest needs and yearnings. We want not merely to realise our privileges as God's children, but to possess *Himself*. What He *is*, not merely what He *gives*, is the true life of man. And religion means love and prayer and aspiration, because it means the untiring pursuit of one thing only and always, namely, God Himself ; it means the habit of passing upward and onward through the bewildering multiplicity of outward things, to Him as the true Rest of the soul, as the one Object of hope, desire, and joy.

This is simplicity. But, it may be asked, "What about difficulties of belief? What about the hard sayings and technicalities of theology? These

¹ G. Congreve, *Christian Life a Response*, p. 188.

are not the days of the world's childhood. Surely our creed must be intricate, complex, if it is to correspond to the intricacy and complexity of life." This is manifestly true, of course; but a simple heart finds a simple way of dealing even with difficulties. To it, everything that saddens, perplexes, or burdens the mind is only fresh matter for prayer—something to take to God, to lay out before God. That which is *too hard* for it to understand it carries into *the sanctuary of God*.¹ It learns the meaning of the words, *They had an eye unto Him, and were lightened*. What man needs is not so much correct ideas about God, as God Himself; not so much clear views of duty and life, as the Truth itself. Systematic and technical modes of thought to a great extent drop from us as our experience of life advances. "My mind," says Père Gratry, speaking of the growing simplicity that comes with years,² "has taken a dislike to technical and uncommon words, to systematic and peculiar words, to striking or subtle expressions and those restricted to any age or school; and I like now the simple, old-fashioned, common words that belong to all times

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 17.

² In *La Connaissance de l'Ame*.

and all places. But I know that with these universal and simple words everything may be said. . . . All that is curious, useless, unprofitable to man and that does not lead to God, dries up and withers like the grass. . . . The further I go, the more I feel that Truth, like Virtue, is in the centre and midst of things."

But next, if a safe test of spiritual advance may be found in a growing tendency to simplicity in our thoughts about God, so also, we may think, it will appear in a certain independence of external aids to devotion. For the heart that yearns for God alone will make every spot of earth a sanctuary, and will find, even in its dark places, rays of the Divine light and beauty. As Whittier sings—

No picture to my aid I call,
I shape no image in my prayer ;
I only know in Him is all
Of life, light, beauty everywhere,
Eternal goodness here and there !

I know He is and what He is,
Whose one great purpose is the good
Of all. I rest my soul on His
Immortal Love and Fatherhood,
And trust Him, as His children should.

If religion means the life of love, of friendship, of union with God, we shall judge of all aids to

devotion according as they help or hinder, stimulate or repress, the power of holding real communion with the Father and with Christ through the Spirit. This is a point that needs honest consideration at the present time. Does not experience teach us that the multiplication of stated devotions sometimes chokes the spirit of prayer? that the accessories of worship, if they absorb too much thought and attention, make worship itself barren and mechanical? Is it not wise to recognise that the servile temper has too often threatened to mar the freedom of our sonship, and that system and formality need to be carefully guarded, lest they gradually overcloud the peace and joy of our filial service? There is a certain spontaneity and lightness of heart which belongs of right to God's children. *Deus proposuit habere filios impavidos, securos, generosos æternaliter et perfecte.*¹ And simplicity means the habit of passing through even the most venerable and sacred of outward things to God; it means leaning on God, feeding on God, resting in God. The *glorious things*² which Christ has bestowed in His Church—the food of the Eucharist, the open Bible, the gift of absolution,

¹ Luther.

² St. Luke xiii. 17.

the opportunities of common worship, the joy of fellowship in service,—all these are helps which God gives simply and would have us simply use. It is characteristic of true simplicity that it prizes and reverences, but not unduly exalts, the ordinances of the Church. It strives to use worthily the channels of Divine grace and power, but withal it bears in mind

That Book and Church and Day are given
For man, not God—for earth, not heaven—
The blessed means to holiest ends,
Not masters, but benignant friends ;
That the dear Christ dwells not afar,
The King of some remoter star,
Listening at times, with flattered ear,
To homage wrung from selfish fear,
But here, amidst the poor and blind,
The bound and suffering of our kind,
In works we do, in prayers we pray,
Life of our life, He lives to-day.¹

Finally, we shall seek simplicity also and above all in our motives, conduct, and character. The thought that we come from God, that we live beneath His eye, that when we depart hence we go to Him, gives unity and stability to life, and enables us to see and act clearly amid its entanglements. "A man who is living apart from

¹ J. G. Whittier, *The Meeting*.

God is inconsistent with himself. Now he acts on one principle, now on another, now without any aim at all. But when he chooses God for his end, God becomes a new principle which will draw together, organise, and invigorate all his faculties ; every faculty is under obedience to the supreme faculty, his spirit, and his spirit is under obedience to the Holy Spirit of God.”¹ In an atmosphere of criticism there is a danger of self-consciousness ; in the battle of competition, a danger of inordinate self-assertion. Only the thought of God can overcome the teasing consciousness of self. The undue regard for men’s opinion ceases to trouble him who steadily keeps in view God and His will. The simple-hearted are free from all division of mind, all distracted aims, all mixed motives. In everything that they do or say they are *themselves*. They speak without evasion, affectation, or pretence. They act with decision, with directness, without desire of display or notice. To them, what other people say or think about them is a very small matter. In a word, the heart that is truly simple seeks God in all things ; believes utterly in His loving purpose of good ; desires only to please Him

¹ G. Congreve, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

with perfect confidence that *His commandments are not grievous*, that mysteries are revealed to the meek, and that to the childlike and pure in heart belongs the transfiguring vision of His glory. *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*; over such as these the thought of God

. . . broods like the day, a master o'er a slave—
A presence which is not to be put by.

Even in this life they stand ever *before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.*

III.

CONVERSION AND REPENTANCE.

Back to the Door, which ever open lay ;
Back to the Table, where the Feast still stood ;
Back to the Heart, that never, night nor day,
Forgat me in my most forgetful mood.

J. S. B. MONSELL.

THE Epistle for Ash Wednesday, taken from the book of Joel, sets before the Church, in clear and simple terms, the main duty of Lent: *Turn ye even to Me, saith the Lord, with all your heart.* And, as Bishop Andrewes beautifully points out, the voice of religion harmonises with that of nature: "For once a year all things turn; and that once is now at this time, for now is the turning of the year. The earth and all her plants, after a dead winter, return to the first and best season of the year. The creatures, the fowls of the air, the swallow and the turtle and the crane and the stork, 'know their seasons,' and make their just return at this time every year. Everything now

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turning, that we also would make it our time to turn to God in.”¹

Turn ye. In seeking to know the meaning of “conversion,” we naturally call to mind the parable which of all others teaches us in the simplest form the meaning of a soul’s conversion to God. Doubtless there are multitudes who are as the prodigal son—children of God, but wandering in a far-off country ; dead in sins, and needing to be called home by some touch of remembrance, wakening first self-pity and then penitence. *I perish with hunger. I will arise, and go to my father.* But there are many whose case is different ; perhaps they form the majority in every Church. They are baptized, confirmed, some perhaps are even regular communicants, but they are not at peace. It is not well with them. They are in the Church, but are not in the “state of salvation.” They are burdened with the weight of unconquered sin ; they find little or no pleasure in the thought of God or in the practice of religion ; they live the life of self-love ; even from the sacrament of love they go *empty away*. And why is this ? Surely not for want of faithfulness in God ; not for want of love and pity in the Saviour ; not for want of

¹ *Sermons, Of Repentance and Fasting.* No. IV.

power and willingness to help in the Spirit of grace. No; what they need is *conversion*—the turning of the heart and *will* to God. God has done great things “for us men and for our salvation.” He has displayed the riches of His power and the depths of His mercy. But something is needed on our part. We have to *abide* in Christ, and if we are so to abide, in living union with Him, it can only be by the exertion of our will—what St. Anselm calls *bonæ voluntatis amata et spontanea tenacitas*.

Conversion then means the conscious submission of heart and will to God. It means self-surrender, willing and loving response to the voice of the Saviour ever pleading with us—pleading as earnestly in our days of health and joy as in those of weakness and sorrow; pleading in the daily tokens of Divine providence; in the inextinguishable longings of our own heart; in the ordinary gifts and blessings of life; in the awakening of our own better self; in the call of the Church crying, “To-day:” *To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts*. Conversion, we may say in a word, means turning to God. It may be sometimes—though not, perhaps, very often—a sudden movement or impulse of the will, as in

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the case of St. Paul. Sometimes it may be the crowning point of a long inward struggle, as it was with St. Augustine. Generally speaking, perhaps, conversion is an oft-repeated process—a fresh turning to God from time to time with renewed insight into His will, and a more heartfelt desire to serve and please Him. Indeed, every new beginning in our spiritual life may be a conversion. Even the saint and martyr Ignatius, with death in the amphitheatre at Rome in near prospect, cries, “Now I am beginning to be a disciple.”

And God appeals differently to the will in different cases. Sometimes He touches a man through the emotions; sometimes through the intellect. Sometimes it is the weight of God's judgments that vanquishes a stubborn heart; more often, perhaps, it is the overwhelming sense of His undeserved compassion. Some vision of the beauty, the majesty, the tenderness of God dawns upon the soul; some new feeling of “the fatherliness of the Father” awakes within it, and it casts itself with the simplicity, the recklessness of a child, into the arms of God. But in any case conversion always means essentially the same thing—self-surrender, the yielding of the will—the central self—to God.

Further, a true conversion leads to repentance—a first repentance in many cases, a deeper repentance in most. And here the parable of the Lost Son gives us the very help we need. It shows us, for instance, that repentance does not consist in mere feeling, but implies action: *he arose*. It means a real forsaking of the old life: *he came to his father*. It demands faith: the prodigal trusted to the unchanging good will of his father; he believed that he would be welcomed, pardoned, cleansed, relieved. The parable also illustrates those three parts or aspects of repentance which, after all, cannot be separated, for they are only different aspects of one and the selfsame movement of the will. Repentance implies *contrition*—loving sorrow for the wrong we have done to God. *Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight*. The penitent heart does not think of its sin as a “mistake,” a “misfortune,” a “fault of nature.” It aches to think that it has wounded the tender, merciful heart of a loving Father. Then there is *confession*: *Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee*; and *satisfaction*, that is, willingness to accept the punishment of wrong-doing, and to make such amends as are still possible: *Make me as one of thy hired servants*.

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Much has been said and written of late years about the ordinance of private confession. This is not the place in which to discuss what has been, and still is, a matter of painful controversy. Let it suffice to quote a clear statement in the last Charge to his clergy given by the late Bishop Creighton : "The Church does not impose confession as a discipline : it recommends, in the first place, confession to Almighty God ; it reserves private confession for cases where a man is unable to quiet his own conscience. . . . The normal character is to be formed by a quiet and consistent walk with God, according to the dictates of a conscience trained to constant openness before Him. Serious lapses into sin, the consciousness of evil habits which have formed a fetter, the awakening of remorse for sins which have been long concealed—about these and such-like things counsel and comfort may be sought according to the wish of him who seeks it." In a word, private confession is "left to every man's discretion."¹ Its value as a discipline of the conscience depends on the perfect liberty allowed in resorting to it. The Anglican Church offers it to those who feel their need of it ; in some cases (*e.g.* of sickness) she advises and even urges it. In no

¹ *The Church and the Nation*, p. 313.

case does she venture to enforce confession, nor would she feel herself justified in requiring it as a condition of receiving the Holy Communion. On the other hand, the late Archbishop of Canterbury in his *Primary Charge* says that he believes that confession, duly safeguarded, "has often been of invaluable help to Christians." "It is better," he adds, "to follow such rules of life as make for strength, even if we are weak. But weakness is sometimes of such a character that a support is perpetually needed, and we have no right to prohibit the giving of such support." Private confession, if used, should be an integral element of a discipline which aims at training the soul in true Christian self-reliance. The end of all repentance is growth in character, and spiritual strength through a closer union with God.

Let me conclude by suggesting two thoughts. The first is this, that the parable of the Lost Son itself teaches the *efficacy* of conversion and repentance. There can be no image more full of comfort to the penitent than that of the Father welcoming home the prodigal. It brings home to us the patience of God, whose long-suffering, as St. Paul says, *leadeth us to repentance*. It teaches that God watches and cares for His children, even while they

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are far astray from Him ; that He watches over them in their wild wanderings, and *will wait that He may be gracious* unto them ; that He runs, as it were, to meet even the faintest movement of the will, the least turning of the heart, toward Himself. Nay, we have something more than the language of the parable. There are the arms of Jesus outstretched upon the cross—a visible emblem and pledge of the all-embracing love of the Father. There are His own sure words of promise : *He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.*

Finally, we may notice that the efficacy of repentance is a matter of *experience*. We can appeal to the testimony, repeated in every age of Christian history, of those who have *set to their seal that God is true*. There is a multitude, which none can number, of men and women who *know* that they are forgiven ; who *know* that the grasp of evil on them has been loosened ; who have experienced the glorious “rebound of the enfranchised soul,” who in conversion and penitence have found their Saviour, or rather have been found of Him. They have *tasted that the Lord is gracious*. They have experienced the freedom, the joy, the blessedness of the soul which God Himself has received, and

brought home ; which He has clothed once more with the *first robe*—the white robe of innocence renewed, and has strengthened with His princely Spirit¹—the Spirit of courage and of love, of self-discipline and of power.

¹ Ps. li. 14, Vulg. : *Redde mihi letitiam salutaris tui : et spiritu principali confirma me.*

IV.

THE SECRET OF A CHRISTIAN'S POWER.

Ay unto these distributeth the Giver
Sorrow and sanctity, and loves them well,
Grants them a power and passion to deliver
Hearts from the prison-house and souls from hell.

F. W. H. MYERS.

IN a former paper an attempt was made to describe the true Christian or Christ-like man. We now proceed to inquire into the secret of his power. For we may observe two things about Christian people. They are, or ought to be, at once the light and the salt of the earth: on the one hand, attracting others and eliciting what is good in them by the sheer beauty of their character; on the other hand, distinct from the world around them, and supplying that wholesome element of severity and "grit" which it lacks.

Both of these similitudes, "light" and "salt," express different forms of power. St. Paul says

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that *the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*;¹ and so it might be said of a true Christian that wherever he is placed, whatever be his work, he exercises *power*: attractive and uplifting power; purifying and healing power. It is natural to inquire in what this power consists, this strange "force of thought, feeling, and purpose," as Channing calls it, which is, or ought to be, characteristic of Christians. The answer is that *Life is power*, and, as we have seen, the Christian is intensely alive. He possesses the vigour of a personality renewed and transfigured by the life of Jesus Christ continually imparted to him by the Spirit of God. We must never forget that Christianity is no mere system of thought and conduct, no mere code of morals, but the manifestation of the Divine life in the lives of men.

"I believe," a thoughtful writer has lately said, "that the fuller and more practical recognition of the immediate presence of the Holy Spirit, prompting and actuating men, or striving with them—will be a distinguishing feature in the coming time."² There are not wanting signs of a new outpouring of the Spirit, and when it comes it will surely bring a larger liberty of thought, a vaster

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 20.

² H. Latham, *The Risen Master*, p. 461.

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energy of faith, a more generous activity of love—in a word, a new manifestation of power.

Let us consider the way in which the Spirit of God works. (I do not now speak of His work in the world—His work of reproof, warning, enlightenment—but of His work in Christians.) We know that where the Spirit comes Christ comes, with all the healing influences of His humanity, all the life-giving energy of His Divine Personality. Through the agency of the Spirit Christ works in the world, quickening, inspiring, uplifting. The world indeed *seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him*; but to eyes enlightened by Him, tokens of His presence and action are everywhere visible. To them the universe is a spiritual order, in which all things are controlled by a spiritual purpose and tend toward an event “far off” indeed, but “divine.”

One mark of the presence of the Spirit is the courageous temper.¹ The prevalence of fear is a great obstacle to religious progress. There is the fear of the world,—the fear of man,—suppressing the utterance of honest conviction, discouraging manful attempts to assail organised errors and hypocrisies, or to traverse popular

¹ 2 Tim. i. 7.

prejudices and mistakes. There is the fear of inquiry into the grounds of faith—fear of scientific research or historical criticism; fear of independence and unpopularity; fear of losing the good opinion of those with whom we generally act, what Bishop Westcott calls those “enslavements to party which often condemn whole lives either to thoughtless insincerity or to a late repentance.” What a barrier fear may present to movement, enterprise, the spirit of leadership! On the other hand, the Spirit of God brings liberty, *the glorious liberty of the children of God*.¹ He imparts a simplicity of character, unfettered by over-anxiety or scrupulosity; a hopefulness about men not embittered by pessimism; a courage not easily daunted by delays and obstacles. These qualities are, as we know, a power in any sphere of life. We do well to remember that they are the characteristic gifts of the Spirit of God.

Again, the Spirit inspires men with the love of God,² and love is not only a great grace, ministering in marvellous ways to the well-being of mankind—it is a unique force in the world, giving strength to character, purity to

¹ Rom. viii. 21; cp. 2 Cor. iii. 17.

² Rom. v. 5.

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motive, lustre to intellectual gifts. That it makes men strong out of weakness ; that it sustains them under the pressure of trial, delay, disappointment, and persecution ; that it makes all things possible ; that it is, in St. Paul's noble phrase, *the bond of perfectness*,—these are commonplaces of religious experience. That can be no mere feeble emotion, no mere spiritual ecstasy, of which the writer of the *De Imitatione Christi* writes, "Love feels no burden, takes no account of labours, attempts what is beyond its strength, reckons nothing impossible, because it thinks all things lawful for itself and all things possible." That can be no transient and powerless sentiment of which St. Paul says, *Love never faileth*.

Once more, the Spirit of God imparts power as a spirit of discipline.¹ This, I take it, does not only imply that in a sincere Christian, as in God Himself, the mighty power of love consents to be restrained and guided by wisdom ; that a "sweet reasonableness" is the fruit of the gospel in character. The spirit of discipline implies a teachable mind, a willingness to submit to the educating influences in human life ; to undergo patiently that training of the whole personality—

¹ 2 Tim. i. 7.

body, soul, and spirit—without which great tasks cannot be achieved, nor great burdens borne. St. Paul himself is an example of the power that may be exercised by a truly disciplined personality.¹ Who that studies his Epistles can fail to mark the unfailing soundness and sobriety of judgment, the practical good sense, which lie behind the Apostle's ardent devotion to his Master and mystical fervour of spirit? In him there is no conflict between the precepts of religion and the teachings of experience. In him a true human sympathy restrains the too rigid application of general principles to particular cases; a wide knowledge of mankind gives warmth and reality to his exhortations; his zeal for God is tempered by merciful thoughts of men and reverence for the image of God impressed upon human nature; the spirit of discipline imparts a certain dignity and reserve even to his most impassioned outbursts of feeling and his most exalted flights of thought.

Is there any limit to what may be hoped for the future of mankind if Christians seriously and steadfastly seek to be *filled with the Holy Ghost*? We know what men *full of the Holy Ghost* have been,

¹ Cp. J. Guinness Rogers, *The Christian Ideal*. J. Bowden, London. 1898.

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and what they can achieve: how they have been *strengthened with might in the inner man*; ¹ how they have been blessed by a vision of the opened heaven; how they have rejoiced to witness the triumphs of grace in the world; how they have been able to appal and confound the guilty, and to preach Christ with power to a hostile world.² When this incalculable force again manifests itself in the lives of Christian people, we shall see what the Bible calls with splendid vagueness *great things, strange things, glorious things*.

[¹ Eph. iii. 16.

² See Acts vii. 55, xi. 24, xiii. 9, iv. 8.

V.

PRAYER.

We do not pray that we may alter the mind of God ; . . . but that we may alter and change our own mind for the better, and thereby become disposed for the good things of which we are desirous.—BISHOP PATRICK.

THE following maxim of Bishop Thomas Wilson, author of the *Sacra Privata*, may fitly introduce our present subject: "He that has learned to pray as he ought has got the secret of a holy life." Bishop Wilson here indicates two facts about prayer: First, that prayer is a faculty of our nature, only to be educated and developed by use and exercise; secondly, that prayer is power. It sets in motion *the powers of the world to come*, and the fruit of it is goodness, with all its subtle and far-reaching influence. The newly awakened religious life of the converted Saul—that life which was destined to achieve such great things—is described in three brief words: *Behold, he prayeth*.¹

¹ Acts ix. 11.

The difficulties which are sometimes felt about prayer generally arise from a mistaken idea of its nature. We are apt to think of it as mere petition—as a means by which we hope to obtain what we want. And certainly from one point of view, prayer is, as Hooker defines it, “a means permitted for the presentation of our lawful desires.” But this is not its essential purpose or characteristic. What prayer really means is intercourse and communion with *the Father of spirits*. It is the form which the life of fellowship or friendship with God necessarily takes. As our knowledge of an earthly friend, our power of sympathising with him, our insight into his aims and character, increase through intimacy with him, so the friendship of the human soul with God grows and is deepened through prayer. Prayer is, in fact, our way of acknowledging that the will of God is the supreme reality in the universe, and that to find it out and fulfil it is our only true happiness. For us in our ignorance, helplessness, and blindness, the “only safety lies in praying that for us, in us, through us, our Father’s will may be done. Affection, meditation, praise will gather round this central prayer, but the essence of them all will be the offering up of our own weak wills to God ; that, according to the law

of all true sacrifice, we may find them again in Him, we may receive them back with usury, cleansed, enlightened, strengthened by that

. . . living will that shall endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock.”¹

The children of God have no desire to change God's will, but they earnestly long to know it, love it, fulfil it. Therefore they pray. They ask above all else for illumination and strength: light to know, grace to accomplish, the will of God. *O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me*²—this cry of aspiration is the typical prayer of a Christian.

As to the lawful objects of petition, we naturally seek guidance in the Lord's Prayer.

First we are taught to ask for spiritual blessings—for those things which we know God wills to bestow on them that ask Him. *Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done.* We should pray that we and all mankind may love, honour, serve, and obey God as He has made Himself known in His Son Jesus Christ; that we may fulfil His revealed will with zeal, with joy,

¹ J. R. Illingworth, *University and Cathedral Sermons*, p. 178.

² Ps. xliii. 3.

with alacrity, with diligence. And we may remember that, in asking for the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are asking for all *good things* in one ;¹ all that is strong and true, pure and beautiful, healthful and holy, we know to be included in that one supreme gift of God's love, that *promise of the Father*,² the Holy Spirit.

Next we may confidently ask for temporal blessings in so far as they are good and expedient for us and necessary for the fulfilment of our appointed work. Bodily strength and sustenance sufficient to enable us to discharge the duties of our calling ; forgiveness for the acts or habits of sin which impede our course or blind our eyes ; protection from the temptations to which our weakness might succumb ; deliverance from the evils and dangers, bodily and spiritual, that beset or threaten us ;—all these things we urgently require and therefore confidently ask, though our heavenly Father *knoweth what things we have need of before we ask*. But for those things which we either know or suspect to be contrary to God's revealed will, we cannot ask. It would be a great want of humility—great presumption, indeed, on our part—to ask (*e.g.*) for a physical miracle, such

¹ St. Luke xi. 13 ; cp. St. Matt. vii. 11.

² Acts i. 4.

as the raising of the dead, for the turning back of the tide, or for the forgiveness of unrepented sin. There are, however, many things about which we may pray in so far as God's will is not certainly clear. Thus a petition for rain under certain circumstances seems to be sanctioned in Scripture,¹ and prayer for the restoration to health of some sick person whom we love is a natural instinct of our hearts. On this point the following statement of a usually wise teacher seems to be too unguarded: "We must not kick against the pricks, or beg that this sickness or pain, the loss of this beloved one, may be averted from us. For God has taught us by many signs and proofs that these things are regulated by fixed laws. And is there not a kind of impiety in refusing to learn the plainest of lessons?"² The truth rather is that we are encouraged to pray for everything we want³ in so far as God does not plainly forbid such prayer in His Word or in His natural providence. We are to pray, in a word, in accordance with His revealed will: *always to pray*.⁴ If we knew the laws that

¹ St. James v. 17.

² B. Jowett, *Sermons on Faith and Doctrine*, p. 254.

³ Phil. iv. 6.

⁴ St. Luke xviii. 1.

regulate the rainfall or the course of an illness, we should still pray, though the form of our prayer would be altered in accordance with our fuller knowledge. In such a case, we should pray for such love toward God that we might ever find *all things working together for good*.¹ Moreover, prayer and work always go together. If we were visited by cholera we should *act* energetically in the sphere where God's laws were manifest; and in the sphere where we needed further light, strength, and direction, we should *pray*: for example, we should earnestly ask that God would show us, and help us to amend those sins of ignorance or neglect that may have brought about such a chastisement.

A word of warning in conclusion. We have to remember—

(1) The need of system and regularity in prayer. We must not be slaves to printed forms or manuals of devotion; but they are generally useful and even necessary helps in educating our faculty of prayer.

(2) The need of preparation of mind. If we are not to be distracted, and therefore fruitless and ineffective in prayer, we must follow Bishop Wilson's advice: "The best way to prevent

¹ Rom. viii. 28.

wandering in prayer is not to let the mind wander too much at other times, but to have God always in our minds in the whole course of our lives." "There is nothing," says a more recent writer—"nothing that we do during the day which may not prove a help or hindrance in times of prayer. In reading, working, thinking, we are unconsciously training our minds for prayer."¹

(3) Lastly, we should recollect that the power of prayer is to be wisely trained by exercise: we must gradually give up more time to prayer. If we are not to grow weary, we must begin with short times of prayer, and so gradually train our spirits for that prolonged communion with God, or at least that habitual sense of His nearness, goodness, and power, which is the secret of a Christian's serenity, strength, and joy.

¹ B. Maturin, *Some Principles and Practices of the Spiritual Life*, p. 109.

VI.

BIBLE-READING.

We present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is wisdom ; This is the Royal Law ; These are the lively oracles of God.—*The Coronation Service.*

NO subject hitherto dealt with in these papers is more important than that which we are now to consider. When we think of the immense influence which the Bible has exercised on the development of our Anglo-Saxon civilisation, and the extent to which it has moulded our language, our literature, our conceptions of life, duty, religion,—we cannot but feel that there is profound truth in some recently published words of Bishop Westcott, himself among the foremost of Biblical scholars : “Nothing less than our national character is at stake in our regard for the Bible.” To our ancestors, the Bible was almost their only book. To-day it is, comparatively speaking, an unknown book. There is much discussion about the Bible,

but very little knowledge of it. Newspapers, magazines, the masses of cheap literature which issue in a constant stream from the press, have crowded out the Bible. People have little time, and less inclination, for the study of anything which does not minister to their amusement or offer them some form of excitement.

On the other hand, there never was a time when the study of the Bible was more important. The very fact that it is so much talked about, so often appealed to, and so constantly made a subject of popular discussion, should lead people to read it attentively and systematically. The less educated classes, and even the heathen in foreign lands, are more or less familiar with the so-called "difficulties" of the Bible. While Secularist lecturers at home have been known to take as their subject for an open-air discourse "The Bible a mass of Falsehood, Corruption, and Superstition," it is said that Colonel Ingersoll's lectures on "The Mistakes of Moses" and various anti-Biblical publications of the late Mr. Bradlaugh, have a large circulation among the natives of India! Again, scientific criticism and archæological discoveries have made the Bible to a great extent a new book. They have furnished us with new points

of view, and new aids for the study of Scripture. They have thrown unsuspected light on innumerable difficulties. We have learned that revelation has been progressive, and that it reflects the characteristics of widely different ages and men. We have realised that every form of Oriental literature—primitive myth and legend, ballad, lyric drama, history and romance, proverb and prophecy—has been employed by the Author of Scripture as a means of holding communication with men, and teaching them different aspects of His truth. Further, to a great extent the results of historical criticism and investigation have been brought within the reach of all. There are cheap commentaries, comprehensive dictionaries of the Bible, manuals of Hebrew literature and history, which have collected and popularised the new knowledge. We have no excuse for being any longer content with a mere hearsay acquaintance with the results of criticism ; we have no excuse for believing that the shallow and ignorant “objections” to the Bible urged by infidel writers and lecturers are “unanswerable.” Once more, the study of the Bible has great present importance because we are now, as ever, face to face with new problems—moral, social, religious—on which

Scripture throws real and valuable light. "The Bible offers us an interpretation of a history and a life not unlike our own, and helps us to see how the counsel of God goes forward through all the vicissitudes of human fortunes and human wilfulness." Amid the tumult of conflicting voices and noise of controversy, the Bible "provides us with a sure touchstone of truth . . . and brings us back to a living fellowship with Him who is the Truth."¹ The diligent study of the Bible fosters a certain habit of mind, a certain way of looking at things, a certain sense of moral proportion, which are necessary conditions of taking any effective part in the solution of the problems which confront modern society.

We have, therefore, every reason for earnestly hoping that the Bible may again become what it once was—the people's book. The late Archbishop of Canterbury, in the dedication to his *Rugby Sermons*, says that "he would gladly sacrifice every other aim, if by so doing he could help any of his pupils to live in the spirit of the Bible, and to love the Lord Jesus Christ." The spirit, the mind of the Bible, is as distinctive and clearly marked a thing as that which St. Paul

¹ Bp. Westcott, *Lessons from Work*, p. 138 f.

calls *the mind of Christ*. Consider, for example, how the seriousness of the Scriptural view of life stands in contrast to the temper of self-seeking and the pursuit of pleasure which are so characteristic of modern life. The Bible, as Bishop Butler says, "looks upon the world in this simple view, as God's world." If indeed it is "a record of human sorrow," the reason is that it contemplates the world *as it is* with steady truthfulness, not overlooking, as we so readily do, the stern and sombre aspects of human life. If we are ever to lay aside *childish things*, and to set ourselves free from the shallow optimism which blinds us to the disorders of the world, we need to drink deep of the spirit of Scripture, and to learn under its guidance to ponder with due seriousness

. . . the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world.

St. Paul tells us that the things *written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*.¹ If they reveal the darkness in which the world is plunged through its alienation from God, they also record the triumphs of grace and the

¹ Rom. xv. 4.

victories of faith which are the ground of Christian hope. In the Scriptures the supremacy of righteousness is vindicated ; the present reign of God is constantly proclaimed. They teach "the Divine grandeur of the present life ;" they console the burdened heart and mind with visions of future glory. In a word, the study of the Bible trains us in seriousness, diligence, hopefulness. Its teaching, from this point of view, is summarised in St. Peter's exhortation, *Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*¹

The following practical suggestions are the result of some experience, both of the difficulties and of the fruitfulness of Bible study :—

(1) We must aim at *regularity and system*. People's opportunities, of course, are widely different ; but there are very few who could not set apart from five to fifteen minutes in the early part of the day for Scripture reading. Whatever time is thus secured should be well used. Our reading must be, not dreamy, but persevering, earnest, and, so far as possible, practical, *i.e.* it should be brought to bear upon our daily

¹ 1 St. Peter i. 13.

life and duty. Further, in order to make our study systematic, we need to read *continuously*. The psalms and the daily lessons might well decide our choice of subjects. Bishop Westcott's advice is that, if no other claims interfere, we should "naturally seek our work first within these limits. A psalm and a lesson, or part of a lesson, thought out daily, will leave us marvelously richer at the end of the year." If we take only one or two verses we should be careful to study the context of the passage. "Few things," it has been said by a devout teacher, "are more dishonouring to the Holy Spirit than not taking the trouble to understand texts, by searching into the context."¹

(2) We need *preparation of heart*; for when we approach Holy Scripture we *draw nigh to God*. "When we *pray*," says St. Augustine, "we converse with God; when we *read*, God converses with us." In Scripture a living Spirit is speaking, and we must place ourselves in His presence with reverence, with recollection, with earnest prayer. We cannot begin our reading or meditation better than by saying on our knees the *Veni Creator*, or at least by using the short prayer of the Psalmist,

¹ Bp. Wilkinson, *Instructions in the Devotional Life*, p. 31.

*Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of Thy law.*¹ The Bible has been beautifully compared to a noble and venerable cathedral, which we should enter with profound awe and joy,² with eager expectations of blessing, with open and submissive hearts. And as we approach our reading with prayer, so we should intermingle it, or at least end it, with prayer. We should seek the help of the Holy Spirit to show us what special lesson we need to learn from what we read, and how we may practically carry it out in daily life.

(3) A very needful piece of advice is that we should be sparing in our use of commentaries. Now and then we require help of this kind, but on the whole the Bible is its own best interpreter. It may, however, be suggested that far more valuable for practical guidance than the ordinary "commentary" is the "exposition." Such books as Professor G. A. Smith's *Isaiah* and *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*; Professor Milligan's *Revelation of St. John*; Bishop Moule's *Philippian Studies*,

¹ Ps. cix. 18.

² The reference is to a sermon preached at St. Paul's in Advent, 1889, by the late Dr. Liddon. Mr. Gladstone, in his book, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, describes the passage alluded to as one "which rises to the very highest level of British eloquence."

Colossian Studies, *Ephesian Studies* ; Bishop Gore's *Sermon on the Mount* and *Epistle to the Ephesians*, may be mentioned as specimens of the kind of works which are on the whole most helpful in the devotional and practical study of Scripture. Not, of course, that we can wisely ignore the results of textual and historical criticism ; but the best plan for ordinary readers is to place themselves under the guidance of writers (like some of those mentioned above) who reproduce the general conclusions of criticism, without going minutely into details which are of interest only to scholars.

(4) The last suggestion I would offer is a very simple one : namely, that we should not aim at too much, lest we should be discouraged by failure and tempted to give up Bible-reading altogether. "Fix your reading," Bishop Westcott advises, "at half the amount which your fresh zeal suggests. The punctual fulfilment of a small task braces for greater effort. Gradual failure in the fulfilment of an ambitious design leaves us permanently weakened and discouraged." Rather the advice may be put in this form : "Even if you have very few and short opportunities of reading the Bible, use them diligently and cheerfully. If you can only get five minutes a day, or thrice a week, do not

fail to make the best of the time at your disposal, and as you find opportunity, do more." A busy surgeon known to the present writer used to rise early every morning for the express purpose of getting an hour with his Bible before breakfast. This is not possible for most people, but in this, as in other things, the richest blessing is not denied to those who have done what they could.

Let me end by giving another quotation from Bishop Westcott's inspiring address on *The Study of the Bible*, to which I have referred more than once—

"For our own sake, and for the sake of those who will come after us, we require once more to regard with renewed devotion our inheritance in the Bible, to guard it watchfully, and to use it with reverence and courage. A people cannot live without an ideal. Wealth, power, pleasure, cannot supply an ideal. But the Bible not only offers to us an ideal of service and sympathy and fellowship, of love to God and man, which answers to the noblest aspirations of all men, but also supplies us with a motive to seek it and power to approach it, the sense of Christ's love for us, and the sense of Christ's presence."

VII.

THE VALUE FOR DEVOTIONAL PURPOSES OF THE CRITICAL STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

It is in the persistently Godward direction of the Bible that we note the characteristic of its inspiration.—BP. BOYD CARPENTER.

By the "critical" study of Scripture is meant, roughly speaking, the systematic employment of the same principles, methods, and aids in the interpretation of the Bible which are ordinarily employed by scholars in the study of secular literature. A "critical" student is one who investigates the Bible as he would any other book: that is, with a due regard (1) to the actual circumstances of place and occasion under which each part of it was compiled; (2) to the condition of the text and the precise meaning of the language; and (3) to the light which archæology or the contemporary history of the world throw on the facts recorded and on the ideas or doctrines expressed.

But the Bible, of course, is not a mere collection

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of ancient literature : it is the record of Divine revelation, and consequently it is one of the chief aids to spiritual communion with God which lies within our reach. The "devotional" study of Scripture means that use of it which ministers to our spiritual needs, and exercises our spiritual faculties. And there is doubtless some truth in the notion that the habit of critical study hinders the free movement of the spirit in its effort to apprehend and embrace the heavenly truths revealed in Scripture. A critical student is apt to be exclusively interested in points which, after all, are secondary or subsidiary : points of diction, style, and textual criticism ; matters of history or ethnography ; details which throw light on the origin of religious customs and ideas, or on the conditions of ancient civilisation. 'The standing danger of all scientific study is disproportionate interest in matters of detail, and failure to appreciate the moral and spiritual import of what is read. The Bible appeals to us primarily as spiritual beings—endowed with intelligence, affections, and active powers of which God is the supreme and rightful object. And while it is certainly true that the neglect of critical study is apt to produce intellectual narrowness, it is

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sometimes justly complained that even eminent critics are singularly deficient in spiritual insight. A "critical" commentator is apt to tell us everything about a chapter or verse of Scripture except the one thing which we chiefly need and desire to know.

That the "critical" and the "devotional" habit of mind are not necessarily opposed is amply proved by the fact that in some great commentators they are most happily combined. The commentaries of Dr. Pusey, or of Bishops Lightfoot and Westcott are instances in point. And it is scarcely necessary to say that an exact, accurate, and scholarly knowledge of the Bible greatly enriches and deepens the mind of the purely devotional student. The wider knowledge derived from careful study opens unsuspected depths in Scripture ; single words and phrases glow with new meaning ; arguments and illustrations are seen to possess an aptness and force hitherto unperceived ; the buried past lives anew ; the circumstances of our own age are found to have their counterpart in those of ancient time. All this *va sans dire*. The gains, however, which we derive from criticism may be looked at somewhat more broadly. If it has in many respects made the Bible a new book to us of this generation, it has

also enlarged our idea of the teaching we may expect to find in its pages. We look for more profound and more sublime conceptions of Almighty God ; more intelligent ideas of His nature and requirement than were possible in a "pre-critical" age. For, after all, what does a believing Christian aim at in the "devotional" study of the Bible? His chief object presumably is to learn more about God : His being and character ; His ways of teaching and disciplining mankind ; His thoughts and purposes concerning the universe ; His judgments upon sinners ; His promises to those who seek Him. Unquestionably the historical method of studying Scripture which belongs to sound criticism opens to us new and perhaps loftier thoughts of God and of His work than were once possible. Briefly speaking, criticism (using the term in the widest sense, to denote the proper use of scientific and historical methods in the study of the Bible) exhibits God as the great educator of man, as the guide, friend, and helper of our race in each successive stage of its upward development. It shows us how gently men's imperfect ideas and conceptions of the Godhead have been dealt with ; how they have been gradually elevated and purified ; how they have been accepted as the

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best that man could offer, and employed as a basis for higher and nobler teaching. Criticism has, we may even say, vindicated the Divine character by opening our eyes to the far-seeing wisdom and patience which bore with moral imperfection and defective thoughts of God, as the necessary starting-point of a world-wide religion. In exhibiting to us the progressive character of Hebrew religion, criticism has enabled us to see even in things which formerly were regarded as stumbling-blocks, instances of the Divine forbearance and mercy. It is not too much to say that it has opened to us new manifestations of the goodness of God, new occasion for wonder, adoration, and praise. And so far criticism certainly ministers to devotion.

Again, a devout reader of the Bible doubtless studies it with a view to ascertaining the mind and will of God. Augustine says: *Homo timens Deum, voluntatem ejus in Scripturis sanctis diligenter inquirat.*¹ And here, too, criticism gives us substantial help. As regards the Old Testament, it corrects our sense of proportion. It assigns to the prophetic office and teaching its rightful place in religion, and in exalting prophecy,

¹ *de Doctrina*, iii. 1.

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with its intensely ethical tone, its hatred of iniquity, personal and social, its passion for righteousness, its thirst after God—criticism vindicates the claim of Jesus Christ to be the fulfiller of the Old Testament, and the claim of the New Testament to supersede the Old. It exhibits the true place and function of the law in the history of the human conscience ; its subordination to the spirit of prophecy ; its value as a temporary discipline ; its failure as an ultimate standard of human conduct. Carrying with us into the study of Scripture the thought of the continuity and progressiveness of revelation, which criticism has so cogently illustrated and enforced, we learn that conduct and character—the sanctification of human nature, the consecration of human life—have been the goal toward which mankind has been divinely guided from the first.

And, incidentally, criticism has helped to clear away obstacles which might have hindered the single-hearted contemplation of God's will and God's nature. It has vindicated the true character and significance of some portions of the Bible which formerly were somewhat misconceived. It has relieved us of difficulties,—of occasions of stumbling and causes of distraction, the

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discussion of which hindered us from perceiving the truth, and experiencing the power, of the Divine message. For instance, if such books as Esther, Ruth, and Jonah are fairly recognised as tales written with a definite religious purpose rather than as narratives of events that literally occurred, we are at once set free from the necessity of discussions which, after all, are irrelevant and profitless. The book of Jonah may be mentioned as a conspicuous instance in point. It is melancholy to reflect on the energy and passion which have been expended on points connected with this book, which are in great measure irrelevant to its main object and purpose. We are told that even in ancient times the heathen scoffed at the miracle of Jonah's whale ; and there is no doubt that in all ages men have wasted their efforts in futile disputation about minor details in the narrative instead of attending to the sublime truths, his testimony to which places the author of Jonah in the very front rank of Hebrew prophets.

This is only one instance of the way in which criticism helps us to enter into the true significance, and understand the true spiritual purport, of different books of Scripture. The whole tendency of criticism is in the direction of

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concentrating attention on what is of most vital importance to devotional students. It teaches us how slight was the extent to which Hebrew thought diverged from the purely religious field. The Hebrew mind cared little for the scientific aspect of things; to it even the exact course of history was a matter of comparative indifference. Its chief interest lay in seeking God, in watching for the tokens of His presence, and in contemplating the world as God's world. The devout Hebrew had no eyes but for Jehovah and His work. And if criticism reconstructs the past in such a way as to enable us to place ourselves alongside of the Hebrew saint or sage, and to enter into his thoughts, hopes, aspirations, and prayers, it necessarily makes us more sympathetic and therefore more intelligent students of the Old Testament. After all, the habit of devout meditation on life, of seeing "God in all things and all things in God," is one which we need to learn from Old Testament teachers. They were men penetrated with the thought of God, men who ever looked for the manifestation of His judgments and the fulfilment of His promises; and since the whole secret of devotion consists in having a *mind stayed on* God, we owe a debt

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to criticism in so far as it teaches us that the matter of chief importance in the Hebrew writings is not so much what is said, as the point of view from which it is said.

It is not necessary to speak of the New Testament particularly. The results of critical study in regard to it are both more familiar to ordinary readers, and are more easily appreciated. It is only needful to remember that the New Testament supplies us with a rule whereby we should always measure the teaching of the Old Testament. We carry with us, in estimating the actions or utterances of Old Testament saints and heroes, a test learned in the school of Christ. If the Old Testament represents to us human nature waiting for Christ and aspiring toward Him, the New Testament exhibits the Divine response to man's need ; it sets forth Christ in His relation to that redeemed humanity which is *the fulness of Him that filleth all in all*. The study of the Old Testament bears directly on that of the New in so far as it helps us to realise those needs and aspirations of man's heart which were satisfied and fulfilled in Christ.¹

¹ Ordinary readers will find the Bishop of Ripon's *Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures*, in the "Temple Bible," very valuable as an aid to perplexed faith.

VIII.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

My words and thoughts do both express this notion ;
That *life* hath with the sun a double motion.
The first *is* straight, and our diurnal friend ;
The other *hid*, and doth obliquely bend.
One life is wrapt *in* flesh, and tends to earth :
The other winds towards *Him*, whose happy birth
Taught me to live here so, *that* still one eye
Should aim and shoot at that which *is* on high ;
Quitting with daily labour all *my* pleasure,
To gain at harvest an eternal *Treasure*.

G. HERBERT.

YEARS ago, the rector of a parish in one of the lowest districts of central London used occasionally to visit a poor widow who occupied a garret in a foul and noisy slum. Among her scanty possessions was a flower-pot, containing a stunted geranium, which she tended with anxious care. One day the clergyman enquired why she spent her pains on keeping the puny little plant alive. "It reminds me," she replied, "that God is here."

This is one of those "parables of nature"

which needs no commentary. Speaking in a previous paper of "Simplicity in Religion," I said that the secret of simplicity lay in holding fast the fundamental truths that religion has to teach. Of those truths, that which perhaps exercises the strongest influence on character—that which contributes most directly to the growth of spiritual power—is the truth of the presence of God. A Being of infinite wisdom and goodness is ever near us, about our path and about our bed, sheltering, guiding, overshadowing us ; the unseen hearer of every word we utter, the unseen watcher of every step we take. We read perhaps of distinct types of *theology* ; we observe how one system gives prominence to the transcendence of God ; another lays the chief stress upon His immanence. At different times, theology has been led to insist on different aspects of the Divine nature ; but *religion* can never afford to ignore the primary truth that Almighty God dwells in every part of His universe ; that He is ever present with His works—"absolutely separate from the creature, yet in every part of the creation at every moment ; above all things yet under everything."¹ And he who has learned to realise this elementary

¹ J. H. Newman, *The Idea of a University*, p. 63.

truth of religion finds everywhere in the visible world glimpses of a hidden glory; he dimly discerns in his fellow-men the sacred lineaments of Christ Himself; he moves and works in an atmosphere of light. There is no spot so dreary, there are no circumstances so dark, so remote as it seems from the operation of God, but that a Christian can say, like Jacob at Bethel: *Surely the Lord is in this place. This is the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*

Now, the thought that God is *not far from every one of us, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being*,¹ may be said to be specially characteristic of St. Paul. To his own life, with its many changes of scene, its strange vicissitudes of travel, the thought may have brought an element of stability and continuity. But the way in which he brought this truth home to himself, and impressed it upon others, is worthy of particular attention. He did not say, "God is with me here, or here." His favourite expression (in the Epistle to the Ephesians alone it occurs in one form or another thirty-five times) was rather *in Christ Jesus*. He tells his converts everywhere that they are *in Christ*. The scene of their toils and sufferings

¹ Acts xvii. 28.

might vary. They might be in Colossæ, surrounded by the emblems of Oriental nature-worship; they might be in Ephesus, where Hellenic paganism had reared its most imposing shrine; they might be in Corinth, with its deep-seated corruptions, its mammon worship, its manifold allurements to vice; or in Philippi, proud of the visible tokens of its connection with the mistress-city of the world; or in Rome itself, the mighty heart of a heathen empire. But whatever might be their outward environment, Christians everywhere were *in Christ—in Him* as a place of refuge, as an atmosphere, as a home of the soul. So, nowadays, a Christian's lot may be cast in the midst of some great centre of civilisation; he may be immersed in business or chained by circumstances to some form of grinding toil; he may be perpetually encompassed by sights and sounds that tempt him to say, *The Lord is not in this place*; he works, he serves, he fulfils the duties of his calling, he meets his neighbours, he moves to and fro—lost to sight in the flood of thronging humanity, swept hither and thither by resistless tides of common life; but he is nevertheless *in Christ*. In the darkest depths of our vast cities God is present; for the Christian is *in Christ*

Jesus—in God. So far as he is true to his heavenly vocation, he *dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

Life, then, has a twofold aspect which, by the man of faith, can never be altogether forgotten, and it is the habitual recollection of God's presence that lifts him above his fellows, that enables him to realise his own individuality and to prove its quality. For the sense of that presence is an element of moral strength. "The test of a first-rate man," it has been said, "is the power to stand alone." The man who can say to himself, *The Lord is on my side ; I will not fear what man doeth unto me*, whether he be statesman or warrior, priest or prophet, man of business or leader of opinion—possesses the secret of power. He can hold out against pressure ; he can stand, as Ignatius bids Polycarp, "like an anvil smitten ;" he can act decisively, promptly, resolutely, and—

if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment, to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover ; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired.

Again, the sense of the Divine presence is a refuge from the rude voices, the ignorant clamour,

that darken counsel and drown the utterance of wisdom. *Thou shalt hide them privily by Thine own presence from the provoking of all men; Thou shalt keep them secretly in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues.*¹ Further, it deepens the sense of responsibility. It was the secret of that "tremendous seriousness" which men noted in Bishop Butler, of that calm intrepidity in peril which has distinguished heroic soldiers and missionaries, of that steadfastness which has made the names of Athanasius, of Savonarola, of Luther, famous in history. Finally, it stimulates a man's energies. It banishes morbidness. It rebukes sloth and timidity. It inspires life, courage, force, the power of command. In a word, all that is simplest, strongest, and truest in human character may be traced to this one root—the habitual consciousness of a presence supporting, illuminating, guarding, quickening the soul, and bearing it on towards the accomplishment of its appointed task.

If this sense of God's presence is indeed such a power in life, how may it be acquired? We may answer: First, by trying to do for God's sake, and as accountable to Him, what we ordinarily do for

¹ Ps. xxxi. 22.

our own sake ; to fill every detail of our life, so far as it may be done, with spiritual purpose. The thought of God should form in us what Charles Kingsley used to call "the blessed habit of intensity," and stimulate us, as it did him, "to go at what we are about as if there was nothing else in the world for the time being."

Secondly, by perfect simplicity in asking God's help, even in the smallest concerns of life. Some will remember what is related of Brother Lawrence : how he was sent to purchase wine for the monastery to which he belonged ; how he said to God, "it was His business he was about ;" and how "he afterwards found it very well performed ;" how it was his rule to do little things, even menial work in the kitchen, for the love of God.

Thirdly, by keeping in check the natural tendency to seek the good opinion of men. A thoughtful writer has observed that this was the "deep and fatal flaw" in the brilliant character of Francis Bacon, and he adds the warning that to aim at pleasing men is invariably "ruinous to truth and power."¹ To seek always the good opinion of men is indeed a fatal misdirection of aim ; and

¹ R. W. Church, *Bacon*, p. 3 (English Men of Letters).

though it is not an easy thing to say or do that which displeases or alienates our fellows, which runs counter to popular feeling or opinion, there can be no question that such moral courage is an essential part of Christian manliness. We must sometimes dare to stand alone, remembering that we stand in the presence of one only Master, Lord, and Judge. "I cannot tell you," wrote Gordon, in his *Diary*—"spite of all the cutting remarks one receives—how happy and composed I feel in *my sure refuge*."

And so, lastly, the great help in this matter is perseverance in the habit of prayer. We must conquer our disinclination to be alone with God. There—in the sanctuary of His realised presence, removed from the strife of tongues and the distractions of the world, we must recollect in silence *what* we are—children and servants of God; and *where* we are—in the world, surrounded by the sights, sounds, duties, and claims of earth, but also *in Christ*, living a life *hidden with Christ in God*, a life unto our Father *which seeth in secret*.

The composure and evenness of temper, the strenuous and cheerful seriousness, the tranquil patience, the habitual diligence which are the fruits that spring from the sense of God's presence,

—these, after all, are only the ennobled and sanctified forms of qualities natural to the Anglo-Saxon character. The habit of reserve—especially in matters of religion—which is characteristic of our race, is often only the outward veil of a spirit which in secret pours itself out in fervent abandonment before the throne of God. There are men and women of every class who exercise a strangely elevating influence upon those among whom they move: not because they frequently mention the subject of religion, not because they have striking personal qualities, but because they bring with them the atmosphere in which they live. Men instinctively feel that they have *been with Jesus*; that they are living out their lives and fulfilling their appointed tasks in the very presence of God.

IX.

WORSHIP.

I but open my eyes—and perfection, no more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to His feet.

R. BROWNING.

WORSHIP, in the widest sense of the word, is the outward expression of man's devotion to God, and, as Channing says in his noble discourse on *Christian Worship*, "is man's highest end, because it is the employment of his highest faculties and affections on the sublimest object." In a true act of worship, reason, affection, and will all combine : reason, for we must needs know what we worship ; affection, for "we needs must love the highest when we see it" ; will, because the inmost personality cannot but bow before that which it recognises

to be higher than itself. And we might add that the sense of beauty also finds its satisfaction in worship. A distinguished man of science, the late Professor Tyndall, once described the emotions with which he gazed on the panorama that lay beneath the summit of the glorious Weisshorn. "It seemed treason," he said, "for the scientific faculty to interfere when silent worship seemed the only reasonable service."

The concentration of all the faculties on God—this is worship. What, then, are its essential marks?

(1) First, true worship must be spiritual. "To Christ," it has been said, "all is nothing that is not spiritual." Worship must be the outward expression of a spiritual fact. It must be the spontaneous outcome of spiritual emotions and aspirations. It must be the symbol of an inward apprehension of God's presence and majesty, of an inward self-surrender to *the Father of spirits*. And from this follow two considerations: First, that the essential act of worship belongs to the will. Adoration, penitence, devotion,—these imply the surrender of the inmost self to God. "We offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto

Thee." And further, worship cannot be altogether independent of outward form. We have bodies as well as spirits, and we cannot perfectly serve God with only a part of our complex nature. The body also *is for the Lord*, and the Son of God took upon Himself our whole nature, including the body, that in and through it He might devote His whole Personality to the service of His Father. His sacred body was to Him the instrument of a perfectly filial will,¹ and the Incarnation for ever consecrated the employment of material things for spiritual purposes. Thus, although true worship is always spiritual, and although spiritual purpose should always control and dominate the use of those aids to worship which appeal to the eye and the ear—yet not only has the body its part to play in worship, but the soul may actually require outward helps to kindle and sustain its love, praise, and adoration. Whatever there is in our churches that, through an appeal to the senses, touches and elevates the heart and compels the mind to realise heavenly realities, is to be gladly welcomed and used. Spirituality is certainly not secured by the absence of ritual. On the other hand, there is always

¹ Heb. x. 5.

some danger of worship being materialised by over-elaboration of its outward side, and therefore the employment of symbols and ceremonies needs to be carefully regulated by due consideration of the spiritual capacity of the worshippers.

(2) Secondly, worship must be rational. We must know what we worship. This principle it is that sanctions the solemn recitation of the Creed in the Church's liturgy. He whom the Church approaches, as the priestly body acting on behalf of humanity, has made known His Name, and the mode and spirit of our worship is conditioned by His revelation of Himself. "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty." The *glory of God* means His character, His nature, His Name manifested to men in nature and in religion. On false creeds only false forms of worship can be based. Worship has too often been degraded by wrong conceptions of God "into a means of propitiating wrath, calming fear, and securing future enjoyment."¹ The true worship is that which approaches God as the Father,²

¹ W. E. Channing, Address on *Christian Worship*.

² St. John iv. 21.

whose great purpose is the spiritual perfection of His children and their participation in His own Divine nature through union with the only-begotten Son.

(3) Once more, worship in its highest form must be a social act—the act of a community rather than of an individual. We draw near to God as members of a world-wide society. We take on our lips, or we silently join in, forms of prayer and praise hallowed by centuries of Christian usage. Those ancient psalms, collects, and hymns are really richer and more full of meaning than any mere unpremeditated effusions can be, because they breathe the faith, the hope, the love of countless souls which, amid all varieties of time and outward circumstance, have been one in the sight of God. Worship is indeed an essentially self-forgetful act. Its aim is not the procuring of benefits for the worshipper, but the rendering to Almighty God of His due, the acknowledgment of His supreme worthiness to be loved and praised.¹

Thus we shall not give way to the shallow and selfish idea that a Christian should go where he “gets most good,” or that he can “say his prayers quite as well at home or in the fields.”

¹ Rev. iv. 11.

We cannot thus lightly set aside our duty and privilege as members of a holy community ; we cannot without doing dishonour to God forsake *the assembling of ourselves together*.¹ Nor, as individual men, can we withhold that surrender of self which we owe to our Creator. For worship is no mere dead, formal, or mechanical act of homage ; it is the free and spontaneous self-dedication of living men to the service of *the living God*.² Nay, it is not so much an occasional or isolated act as a spirit, or habit of mind. He worships rightly who sees God in all things and all things in God ; who reverences nature as the sphere of His self-manifestation, and the human soul as His chosen sanctuary ; who finds everywhere tokens of His beauty and glory ; who in the power of the enlightening Spirit *searches all things, even the deep things of God*.

¹ Heb. x. 25.

² Heb. ix. 14.

X.

HOLY COMMUNION.

“It is the Lord !” no thought but this
Can compass all our wondrous gain ;
“It is the Lord !” our Life, our Bliss,
Who died, who lives to plead and reign,
And whose vast love has fullest vent
In this most Blessed Sacrament.

W. BRIGHT.

RELIGION means, above and beyond all else that may be claimed for it, the life of friendship, fellowship, and communion with God. St. John, when he invites his readers to enter into the fulness of their Christian privileges, writes, *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*¹ That the Founder of Christianity should have appointed a social meal as the outward symbol and occasion of enjoying the fruit of this Divine fellowship, is only in accord with the perfect wisdom which moved Him to choose things simple,

¹ 1 St. John i. 3.

common, and universal, as the fitting channels of His heavenly gifts.

I shall speak of Holy Communion in its most simple aspects: (1) as a gift of God; (2) as an act of worship appointed by Christ Himself; (3) as a token and pledge of Christian brotherhood.

(1) First, then, Holy Communion is the means by which we receive *the Bread of life, the living Bread which came down from heaven*. In all ages the worship of the Church in the Eucharist has been directed to the Father, who of His tender love toward mankind *gave His only-begotten Son*, not merely to be our Example and our Sin-bearer, but also to be the source of true life to the world. The Holy Communion is precious to the children of God, because it is the Father's gift. None of His gifts to men are superfluous. Each is intended to help and lead men on towards that life of filial intimacy and friendship with God to which they are called. Christians know that there is a higher life than that to which their unassisted nature inclines; that they are travelling Zionwards; that they are partakers of *a heavenly calling*; and that to sustain them throughout the toils of their pilgrimage they need food of God's providing. And the effect of the Eucharistic gift is to sustain

and renew the life imparted at Baptism. It should be followed normally by a fuller, intenser, more productive life: a higher level of thought, feeling, action, and devotion. *Gloria Dei*, says Irenæus, *vivens homo. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.*¹

To those, then, who are wearied or perplexed by the unhappy disputes which have raged around the sacred subject of the Holy Communion, let it suffice to say, "If you would live the true life of a spiritual being, the life that consisteth not in the things that a man possesseth, but in the free, glad, and generous service of God and man; if you would be *alive unto God through Jesus Christ*—it can only be through using God's gifts to the full, through feeding devoutly, gratefully, frequently, on the Bread of God. Here in Holy Communion you may seek, and will find, strength, joy, power to persevere: here is the wine that makes glad, the bread that strengthens, the heart of man. Be content to follow the wise advice of Richard Hooker: Be of those who 'meditate with silence what we have by the Sacrament, and dispute not of the manner how.'² Receive simply what God

¹ St. John xv. 8.

² *Ecclesiastical Polity*, bk. v. 67. 3.

simply gives, in the spirit of the noble Eucharistic hymn—

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face,
Here would I touch and handle things unseen ;
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the Bread of God,
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of heaven ;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.¹ ”

(2) But, next, we must not forget that Communion has a Godward aspect: it is an act of worship, reverently observed by Christians in obedience to their Lord's injunction on the eve of His Passion, *Do this in remembrance of Me*. From the dawn of history we find that sacrifice is man's instinctive mode of approaching God. If we receive a heavenly gift in Communion, it is only because we have first offered something on our part, which God deigns to accept, hallow, and endue with Divine and life-giving efficacy. As *accepted in the Beloved* we offer and present to the Father our alms and oblations, our prayers and thanksgivings, but above and in all we present Christ, the crucified, risen, glorified Son of God—or, rather,

¹ H. Bonar.

to speak more strictly, He presents Himself, not less really on earth beneath the veil of the consecrated elements than in heaven, where His manhood lives and pleads at God's right hand. He who said, *This is My Body, this is My Blood*, ordained thereby a rite in which He might identify Himself with the most solemn act of the Church's worship; through which we might be united to Him in pleading the merits of His sacrifice.

(3) One more purpose of the Holy Communion must be mentioned. It is a token and pledge of the brotherhood and fellowship which binds Christians to each other. The Christian Church is a household or family of God, with its common rules of discipline, its common aims, its social Sacraments. The gift of Holy Communion is not meant merely for the edification of individuals; its great purpose is *the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ*.¹ The Eucharist has been rightly called "The Sacrament of fraternity," just as the Christian Church is, to use Bishop Ken's beautiful phrase, "The catholic seminary of Divine love." The Eucharist is in fact a symbol of unity.² In the recently discovered

¹ Eph. iv. 12.

² 1 Cor. x. 17.

liturgy of the ancient Bishop Sarapion, the friend of Athanasius and Antony, this aspect of the Eucharist is expressed in the "prayer of oblation" as follows :—

"Be reconciled to all of us, and be merciful, O God of truth : and as this bread had been scattered on the top of the mountains and, gathered together, came to be one, so also gather Thy Holy Church out of every nation and every country and every city and village and house, and make one living Catholic Church." ¹

There can be no question that this aspect of the Communion is most important, and might, if duly presented, be strikingly impressive. We are told that in Holy Trinity Church, Boston, under the pastorate of Phillips Brooks, "a Communion Service became one of the most impressive of religious spectacles anywhere to be witnessed, when the congregation seemed to rise as a whole and press forward to surround the Lord's table. To the influence of this service, a young Japanese student confessed that he owed his conversion to Christianity."

Thus the Holy Communion is a pledge of our

¹ *Bishop Sarapion's Prayer-Book*, translated and edited by the Bishop of Salisbury, p. 62 (S.P.C.K., 1899).

fellowship with God and with each other. It is a standing protest against a selfish individualism in religion. It expresses in a simple outward rite the truth and power of Christian unity. In showing forth *the Lord's death till He come*,¹ it teaches that Christians are united as brethren by common needs, a common hope, a common love, and a common service.

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

XI.

THANKSGIVING.

The calm beauty of an ordered life,
Whose very breathing is unworded praise!—
A life that stands as all true lives have stood,
Firm-rooted in the faith that God is good.

J. G. WHITTIER.

WE have dealt briefly with the subject of Holy Communion. It remains, however, to mention a point closely connected with what has been already said, namely, that the Communion is the highest and noblest act of Christian worship, because it is the outward expression of a man's essential service—thanksgiving. "Against pessimism," it has been said, "the Church lifts up a perpetual Eucharist;"¹ and if the Bible sometimes speaks as if religion consisted mainly in the life of prayer, there are passages in both Testaments which might almost seem to identify religion with the spirit and habit of thanksgiving. *Whoso*

¹ W. Lock, in *Lux Mundi*.

offereth Me thanks and praise, he honoureth Me.¹ In everything give thanks ; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.²

Unquestionably one element of true religion is the joyous, cheerful spirit. A Christian is one who, as we have seen, exercises power, and the working of power is necessarily accompanied by joy. A Christian's life is built on truth ; and the possession of truth involves joy. We cannot forget that the Gospel promises *great joy* ;³ and that great joy is its immediate fruit.⁴ *The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.⁵*

Thanksgiving, however, is not merely an essential part of the worship of saints. It is the service which all men, in all circumstances and in every station of life, owe to Almighty God. It is the constant acknowledgment that our lives are not in the grasp of a dark, relentless force, carrying us we know not whither, but in the hand of a merciful and infinitely wise Father and Saviour. Thanksgiving is thus the appropriate religion of youth. The young, in their intense delight in the gifts and blessings of life, in the free exercise of

¹ Ps. l. 23.

² 1 Thess. v. 18.

³ St. Luke ii. 10.

⁴ St. Luke xxiv. 52.

⁵ Rom. xiv. 17.

their powers and the unfettered expansion of their nature, will not find the zest of life diminished nor its brightness dimmed by the habit of lifting up their hearts in gratitude to the Giver of all good things. And it may help them to remember that all pleasures are lawful and good for which at the close of a day they can with a full and honest heart thank God. Then, again, wealth, with its wide opportunities of usefulness and its subtle temptations, may be redeemed and consecrated by thanksgiving. If wealth is power, the right expenditure of it is pregnant with deep possibilities of joy, and the utterance of joy is thanksgiving. Men of toil, whose living depends on the labour of their hands or of their brain, need the spirit of thanksgiving to rescue them from hardness and narrowness of heart. Even for those who suffer, "the very iron of necessity is transfigured by this strange alchemy of thanksgiving into the gold of freedom and gladness."¹ Each and all, whose hearts are true and whose works are *wrought in God*, may have their share in the heritage of gladness which Christianity has brought to the world. *All they that are true of heart shall be glad.*²

¹ H. S. Holland, *Creed and Character*, p. 308.

² Ps. lxiv. 10.

*In everything give thanks : giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father,—these are the characteristic teachings of the great Apostle, who was throughout his life bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.*¹ As men advance in years, they find that life is ever bringing new occasions of thanksgiving, wider views of the providence of God. There are the teachings of experience ; and

In me the thought of what hath been doth breed
Perpetual benediction.

Selfish regret for the happiness of “days that are no more” is merged in gratitude for all the undeserved blessings that have enriched the character and disciplined it for the work of life. There is the keen sense of present mercies, of evils averted or overruled for good, of gifts unasked, un hoped for, which have ministered to a man’s usefulness or happiness. Above all, there are the constant tokens of God’s watchful providence. The personal care of God is too often forgotten amid the struggles, the distresses, the competitions which absorb our energies and rob life of its

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 10.

brightness. But a simple heart, which accustoms itself to trace the hand of God in everything, will find new occasions of thanksgiving in the incidents of each passing day. It will discern spiritual purpose even in things trivial and common ; it will be gladdened by tokens, everywhere present, of a providence at work, giving dignity to the meanest thing that lives, and showing that God is One whom "greatness does not overwhelm nor minuteness escape." "Would you know," asks William Law, in his *Serious Call* (chap. xv.), "who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who prays most or fasts most ; it is not he who gives most alms, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice ; but it is he who is always thankful to God, who wills everything that God willeth, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it."

The spirit of true piety and of true wisdom breathes in the tender lines of Whittier's poem, *My Psalm*—

All as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold ;
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told.

Thanksgiving.

Enough that blessings undeserved
Have marked my erring track ;
That wheresoever my feet have swerved,
His chastening turned me back ;—

That more and more a providence
Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good ;—

That death seems but a covered way
Which opens into light,
Wherein no blinded child can stray
Beyond the Father's sight ;—

That care and trial seem at last,
Through memory's sunset air,
Like mountain ranges overpast,
In purple distance fair ;—

That all the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm ;
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm.

And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west winds play ;
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day.

XII.

SELF-DISCIPLINE.

Here the probation was for thee
To show thy soul the earthly mixed
With heavenly, it must choose betwixt.
The earthly joys lay palpable,—
A taint, in each, distinct as well ;
The heavenly flitted, faint and rare,
Above them, but as truly were
Taintless, so, in their nature, best.

R. BROWNING.

WE might take as a motto suitable to our present subject the words of Ps. cxix. 9: *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? Even by ruling himself after Thy word.* For the question now to be answered is—What comes after conversion, after that first turning of the heart and will to God which is the beginning of a better life? We have previously observed that, generally speaking, conversion, in its true and full signification, is not the work of a moment, but a lifelong and often arduous process—

Let no man think that sudden in a minute
All is accomplished and the work is done ;
Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it,
Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun.¹

The secret of a changed life is, that whereas the soul formerly went its own way and followed its own desires, it now schools itself to obey the will of God—the will or (as the Psalmist writes) the *word* of God, revealed in providence, in the Bible, in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

If conversion consists in the Godward movement of man's will, it is clear that self-discipline must mean the strengthening, the renewal, the education of the will. The converted man has so to speak, enthroned *will* once more in its rightful place as the master and leader among all the faculties, instincts, appetites, and passions of his nature. And we should remember that the discipline of the will is a matter which affects much more than the welfare of the individual. It vitally concerns the moral condition of society as a whole. At the close of his celebrated book on *Progress and Poverty*, Mr. Henry George throws out a hint as to the true direction which efforts after social improvement should take. "We see," he says,

¹ F. W. H. Myers, *St. Paul*.

"that *human will* is the great factor, and that, taking men in the aggregate, their condition is as they make it, . . . that economic law and moral law are essentially one."¹ Considering that *character* is the supreme force in the amelioration of social conditions, a man is obviously contributing to the solution of grave public problems by personal self-discipline. He is training himself, and inspiring others, to use aright the privilege of political and social freedom. An English historian² has observed that "the great question for the modern world to determine is how men are to be fitted to bear the heavy burden of liberty." People are apt to regard liberty as an inalienable right and possession, forgetting that it also implies a heavy weight of responsibility. The chief safeguard for the true and beneficent use of freedom lies in the habit of self-discipline; the secret of strong and noble character is a disciplined will.

There are two great forces which may be successfully brought to bear upon the will. There is the power of religion and the power of imagination. Religion goes straight to the root of this matter of self-discipline by supplying the will both

¹ *Progress and Poverty*, p. 503.

² Bishop Creighton.

with motives and helps. For religion proclaims the true character of God as a Father, who has great purposes for the world, and has wrought great things on its behalf; who has manifested His good will toward His creatures, and His readiness to bless them, by an immeasurable act of self-sacrifice and condescension; who has in the Person of His beloved Son toiled, served, suffered, in order to enable man to accomplish his original destiny as the offspring of God and the heir of all things. In a word, religion proclaims the love of God, and the story of that love must needs awaken a response in the heart of man; must needs kindle in him desire, gratitude, zeal; must needs nerve him to make great ventures of faith and heroic endeavours to live as God would have him live. There is no imaginable motive that can act upon the will so potently as the assurance of the love of God. But, further, religion offers help to the Christian in his struggle. It tells him of a Redeemer *alive for evermore*, from whose glorified Manhood proceeds the Spirit—the spirit not of cowardice, but of power and love and discipline. *I can do all things*, is the triumphant cry of St. Paul, *through Christ that strengtheneth me*.¹

¹ Phil. iv. 13.

The Holy Spirit makes His abode in man, and strengthens him to do and to bear those very things from which his unassisted nature shrinks. And this incalculable power of the Spirit of God and of Christ is within the reach of all who simply "ask." *Your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.*¹

The power of imagination, too, is not to be despised. You educate your will by inspiring it with noble ideals. Therein lies the peculiar value of the study of history and biography. "The great good," says Phillips Brooks, in one of his note-books, "of reading history or biography is to get a glimpse of men and nations and ages doing their duty ; the great gain to be got from it is a deeper worship and reverence for duty as the king and parent of all human life."² There are visions—visions of true greatness, true glory, true goodness—which come to the young through wisely directed reading, and which sometimes determine their whole conception of the end and aim of life. Ruskin, in one of his letters, declares that "the especial calamity of this time" consists "in having no food any more to offer to the imagination" of

¹ St. Luke xi. 13.

² *Life of Phillips Brooks*, by A. V. G. Allen. Vol. i. p. 349.

youth ; and certainly we cannot safely ignore that potent element in the education of character—the culture of the imagination. The temper of Christian idealism is a power to be developed by the contemplation of the highest and best that men have actually achieved : and no better advice—no advice more calculated to act directly on conduct and character—can be given than that contained in the inspired words of St. Paul, *Whatsoever things are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, of good report : if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things.*¹

Having, then, motives to impel his will, aids to fortify it, ideals to inspire it, the converted man grapples with the task of self-discipline. He aims at subduing every impulse, every inclination, every thought, *to the obedience of Christ*. His task is, in fact, twofold : he has duty to fulfil, and appetites to restrain. The fulfilment of plain, obvious duties is by no means always easy or agreeable. Human nature is apt to take the line of least resistance, and the converted will has to be braced by the habit of steadily doing the duty that lies nearest. And gradually, as we know, habit becomes instinctive, and what at first is hard gradually ceases to

¹ Phil. iv. 8.

cost us effort. A person who neglects trivial duties does not only injure himself: "his moral flabbiness, due to shirking of minor duties which he will not put forth the perpetual effort to discharge, adds one more moral weakling to society and so weakens the whole."¹ Then there are appetites to be controlled. The will must be strengthened by repeated acts of self-denial and self-mastery. Bodily instincts and passions, the powers of thought and imagination, the bias of temperament,—all have to be brought into subjection ; and "asceticism" —a word which is often mentioned with dislike or contempt, as if it denoted something alien from the Spirit of Christ—means that process of education or discipline by which the will is restored to its rightful supremacy. Fasting, whatever form it may take, is a Christian's way of bringing his body and spirit into subjection to the Spirit of God. Here is a wise and comprehensive description of fasting, taken from one of St. Bernard's sermons: "If the appetite alone has sinned, let that alone fast: but if other members, let them also fast: the eye from curious sights and wandering glances, from looking with pleasure at any glass which reflects self; the

¹ *The Queen's Best Monument*, a reprint from the *Spectator*, p. 33.

ear from rumours, praise of self, slanders, gossips, controversy ; the tongue from detraction, murmuring, fault-finding, talking of self and our own troubles ; the hand from needless work which hinders prayer ; but more than all, the soul from vices and self-will.”¹ “Asceticism,” indeed, means nothing more than doing what St. Paul advises when he bids Timothy *exercise himself unto godliness*.² As the same Apostle says elsewhere, *he that striveth for the mastery is temperate*—exercises self-control—in all things.³

In conclusion, let us return for a moment to the thought of that “heavy burden of liberty,” the right bearing of which is the duty laid upon every Christian. True liberty means that freedom which the truth gives, the freedom which belongs to a nature which “the truth has filled with strength.”⁴ That man is free whose will is once for all emancipated by the grace of God and by the discipline of self from the stern pressure of inherited tendencies, acquired habits of wrong-doing, and external circumstances. *The glorious liberty of the children of God*⁵ can only mean that *reign of God*

¹ *In Quadragesima*, Serm. iii. (quoted by C. W. Furse, *Helps to Holiness*, p. 48).

² 1 Tim. iv. 7.

³ 1 Cor. ix. 25.

⁴ Phillips Brooks.

⁵ Rom. viii. 21.

in man which finally crowns and rewards man's self-surrender to the Holy Spirit. For—

Man is not God, but hath God's end to serve ;
A Master to obey, a course to take,
Somewhat to cast off, somewhat to become . . .
How could man have progression otherwise ?¹

The liberty which is a "heavy burden" is that freedom for self-development, and for the service of God, which is secured for us by wise laws, religious toleration, equal rights and privileges. But we must always remember that we can only attain to true liberty by thinking more of our *duties* than of our *rights*, more of our *obligations* than of our *privileges*, more of God's will than of our own desires. The service of God alone is "perfect freedom."

¹ R. Browning, *A Death in the Desert*.

XIII.

SELF-RESPECT.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure ;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

A. TENNYSON.

IT is sometimes forgotten, in spite of Bishop Butler's well-known teaching on the subject,¹ that in its proper degree self-love is a vital part of Christian duty. "Conscience and self-love," says the bishop, "always lead us the same way. Duty and interest are perfectly coincident." In fact, reasonable or virtuous self-love consists in assigning to conscience its due supremacy among our faculties ; and we are to love ourselves for two reasons : first, because God loves us ; secondly, because self-love is the measure of our duty to others. "A man should love himself," says Pascal, "because he has a nature capable of good." There

¹ See his *Sermons upon Human Nature*, No. III.

are in every man ideal possibilities, which, because they form part of the Divine purpose for him, are worthy to be loved; what we should love in ourselves is the *new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*.¹ In the words of Augustine, *Tales nos amat Deus quales futuri sumus*. "Love that which you will one day be," he elsewhere says: "for you will be sons of God." Again, if a man is to love his neighbour as himself, he will strive to impart to others what he thinks best worth having for himself; but before he can pay his debt to his fellows, he must first have decided what are those *best gifts* which St. Paul bids us *earnestly covet*.²

For clearness' sake we may consider what is involved in true self-love, first positively and afterwards negatively. (1) Positively considered, self-love includes the general duty of self-culture: a proper care of the body, culture of the mind and imagination, the education of judgment and of æsthetic taste. Thus a Christian will aim at making the body a fit instrument for work. In a very real sense, the best service we can render to society is to make our bodies sound and healthful, for without a high standard of health we can

¹ Eph. iv. 24.

² 1 Cor. xii. 31.

neither efficiently fulfil the special task allotted to us in the social order, nor can we stand the strain of competition, which in every sphere of activity is the normal law of progress and achievement. Modern life chiefly tests the power of endurance. Accordingly, the habit of endurance is likely to be more useful than the power to perform spasmodic or sensational feats of strength. There are freaks of athleticism which are as immoral as they are senseless ; for example, a recent bicycle race, which was justly described in a daily paper as "a six days' folly," when men "wobbled round and round the track delirious from fatigue," one even went raving mad, and another "dropped from his machine disabled for life."

Of the cultivation of the *mind* and *imagination* something will be said particularly in another paper. Let it suffice to point out here that in the study of science, art, and literature we have access to a vast treasury of great and ennobling thought ; we have the best means of educating ourselves in "admiration, hope, and love ;" we may acquire something of that sustained elevation of tone by which men become the very salt of the society in which they move. But the most important part of the true self-love consists in the training of

character by discipline of the will, by wise choices and brave refusals, by bringing under the dominion of the Spirit of God every element in our personal life. And this implies "an effectual attention to the idea of life as a whole;"¹ a just estimate of our capacities, opportunities, and limitations. Self-respect, in fact, consists in being "ourselves without our faults,"—all that we are capable of being.

(2) Viewed negatively, self-love includes all that the Greek meant by the word σωφροσύνη—sobriety, chastity, and temperance—or, as Aristotle defines it, "moderation"—the mean state—"in regard to pleasures." Pleasure-worship is admittedly a peril of the present day. In every class of society there are multitudes who are *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*;² and the result is to be seen in the widespread enfeeblement of will and conscience—the mainspring of character. Recreation, instead of being a means enabling men to work better, is often exalted into the regular business of life, or at least is regarded as the most serious subject of thought and conversation.³ On the other hand, the Christian point

¹ Bosanquet, *The Civilization of Christendom*, p. 290.

² 2 Tim. iii. 4.

³ Athleticism has been complained of as bringing with it "the

of view is admirably expressed in the following ancient collect, taken from the Sacramentary of Leo the Great:—

“We beseech Thee, O Lord, to renew Thy people inwardly and outwardly, that as Thou wouldest not have them to be hindered by bodily pleasures, Thou mayest make them vigorous with spiritual purpose; and refresh them in such sort by things transitory, that Thou mayest grant them rather to cleave to things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”¹

But Christian temperance is not mere abstinence from pleasure. Its aim is positive, namely, the cultivation of moral and spiritual power. He who strives for mastery is *temperate*—self-restrained—in *all things*.² Temperance is the virtue of the man whose ideals are high; who realizes the grandeur and power of “sovereign self-mastery.” “His temperance is no monotonous restraint, but an ordered use of every gift which he has received, as part of his sacrifice of himself.”³ The temperate man faces life and uses its gifts and blessings

intolerable evil of an ever-present subject of facile and effortless conversation.” See Bosanquet, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

¹ Bright's *Ancient Collects*, p. 83.

² 1 Cor. ix. 25.

³ Bishop Westcott, *Lessons from Work*, p. 271.

in the spirit of a soldier on a campaign : content with what is sufficient, simple in his tastes, watchful against any form of excess that may bring him under the power of the world. He controls circumstances instead of being overpowered by them ; in repressing what is lowest and seeking the satisfaction of what is highest in his nature he exercises dominion,¹ and that not by cultivating a mere stoic apathy and insensibility to pleasure, but by yielding himself to the chastening control of the Spirit of God.

And this reminds us that, as a matter of fact, religion alone supplies the moral leverage that makes a temperate life possible for ordinary men. In teaching the sacredness of the body and its glorious destiny as the organ of an immortal spirit, in setting before us the possibilities of a human nature which God Himself has assumed, redeemed and exalted to His throne—religion gives to temperance the kind of sanction which can alone make it an effectual power, enabling a man to fulfil the true purpose of his life. For temperance has many aspects ; it is co-extensive with all the functions of manhood. The word “intemperance” is not to be limited, as it

¹ Gen. i. 28.

generally is, to a single form of excess. As Bishop Westcott points out, "There is an intemperance in work as well as in amusement; in energy as well as slackness; in lofty speculation as well as in vacancy of thought. . . . A man may be moderate in the use of intoxicating drink, or a total abstainer, and yet be fatally intemperate, a helpless slave to the pursuit of money or of power or of reputation." Intemperance in the ordinary use of the word only "exhibits in a coarse and repulsive shape that craving for excitement by which we are all assailed."¹ Accordingly, a wise man will bear in mind that his power to withstand the temptation to any particular form of excess depends on the extent to which he practises self-control in matters that seem at first sight to have no bearing on his main purpose. For instance, St. James appeals to a fact of experience when he insists upon the duty of restraint in the matter of speech. *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*² The habit of loose, intemperate speech often paves the way for grave lapses from truth, purity, and good faith. In any case, it is the mark of a character in which conscience

¹ Bishop Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

² St. James iii. 2.

is not a dominant force. In St. James' stern words, *This man's religion is vain*. For where the government of the tongue is neglected there is no safeguard that any part of the personality is subject to the sway of the Spirit of grace.¹ And this is only one illustration of the law that strength is gathered for the great conflicts of life by self-discipline in little matters, by patient bearing of trivial burdens, by unnoticed self-denials. Indeed, a due sense of the importance of small things is an element in that "knowledge" which St. Peter closely connects with temperance.² A man will be "temperate" in so far as he has a just idea of moral proportion, in so far as he perceives what objects are worth pursuit and what must be relinquished; in so far as he sees life "steadily" and sees it "whole."

We have spoken so far of soberness and temperance; but something must also be said about purity—the noblest and loveliest of the virtues which combine to form the quality of self-respect. Like "temperance," purity has a wider sense than we usually connect with the word. The purity of heart on which our Lord pronounces a solemn

¹ Compare Bishop Butler's *Sermon Upon the Government of the Tongue*.

² 2 Pet. i. 6.

benediction seems to mean the singleness—the simplicity—of a nature which finds the perfect satisfaction of its desires in God. The opposite of purity is inordinate or uncontrolled desire—bringing its own penalty in the clouded intellect, the disordered affections, and the weakened will; while the peculiar lustre of purity lies in its being that which is “likest God within the soul.” Its characteristic reward is the vision which is man’s true life. *Vita hominis visio Dei.*

In dealing with the subject of purity, we are to some extent guided by the example of our Lord Himself. To offences against purity He scarcely ever alludes. When they are obtruded upon His notice, He treats them with a delicate reserve and pity far more impressive than the sternest denunciation. We cannot think without awe of the occasion when He twice *lifted up Himself*, first, to bring home to the accusers of a frail and sinful woman their own shameful hypocrisy; secondly, to bid the trembling penitent herself *go, and sin no more.*¹ It is perhaps in accordance with what the Gospels suggest to say nothing here about the fearful prevalence and ruinous consequences of sins against chastity, but rather to

¹ St. John viii. 7, 10.

touch briefly on two points: the safeguards of purity and its rewards.

What, then, are the main safeguards of purity? Scripture itself teaches, in the case of Samson, that no physical strength is a protection against sins of the flesh; by the examples of David and Solomon that neither a manly and well-spent youth, nor high intellectual gifts, can ensure immunity from the temptations of mature life. Greece was not saved from immeasurable degradation by her art or her philosophy; Rome was not protected from corruption by her military prowess or her majestic fabric of law. Faith in God alone avails to combat and subdue this terrible foe both of individuals and nations.

First, then, among safeguards stands religious faith. *We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.*¹ The gospel not merely re-enforced what even just and wise heathens had taught as to the sanctity of the human body; it supplied a new and powerful motive to purity. That which the Son of God had Himself worn as a vesture, redeemed by His blood, and lifted to the throne of heaven; that which had become by *the washing of regeneration* the very temple of the Divine Spirit—could no

¹ 1 St. John iv. 16.

longer be used as an instrument of sin. It must be offered up as a living sacrifice in response to the Love which had redeemed and consecrated it. Religion, in fact, brings to bear upon this evil the expulsive power of a new affection. There are many indeed who, like Tennyson's Arthur, have experienced the uplifting and purifying power of an innocent human love :

For indeed I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.¹

But this is only one aspect of the fact that purity consists not merely in emptying the heart of wrong desires, but in learning to love aright ; and all that tends to develope in us the love of God and of man for God's sake is a power making for purity of heart.

Nor must we overlook Christ's law of mortification. *If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out.* In aiming at purity, the habit of general self-restraint in other matters is essential. Men fail in their struggle with fleshly sin because they have never

¹ Tennyson, *Guinevere*.

mastered themselves in the matter of speech, temper, recreation, study, pleasure. The habitual discipline of the will in minor details of life fortifies it for the strain of a serious conflict. The habit of guarding the eyes, the tongue, the hands, the thoughts at other times will stand a man in good stead in the hour of his sorest need. "Mortification," however, implies something more than self-restraint. It involves the cutting off of even innocent pleasures that are found perilous to purity ; it means incessant watchfulness against the least occasions of sin.

Occupation, again, is a wonderful safeguard. Bishop Taylor quaintly says in his *Holy Living* that "no easy, healthful and idle person was ever chaste, if he could be tempted : " and there can be no question that plenty of work, mental or bodily, and the habit of giving one's mind entirely to the duty of the hour, is "of greatest benefit for driving away the devil." On the other hand, sloth is almost always the forerunner of impurity.

Lastly, we may call to mind the sympathy of Christ with the tempted. He has felt the full pressure of temptation, *yet without sin*.¹ Upon *the throne of grace* He sits—He, "the King of

¹ Heb. iv. 15.

purities, the First of Virgins, the eternal God who is of an essential purity"¹—ready to succour them that are tempted in their time of need. Countless souls have been strengthened and encouraged by the sense of His eye watching their struggle, by the thought that the darkness is no darkness with Him, but above all by the recollection of the travail which He underwent in order to be *in all things made like unto His brethren*, and by the memory of the Cross on which He *endured the shame*, which is the appropriate penalty of fleshly sin.

It is characteristic, however, of the gospel that it seeks to win us to purity chiefly by dwelling on its blessings and rewards. *Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.*

What are the rewards of purity ?

First, perhaps, the power of loving others with a Christ-like affection. *Jesus*, we read, *loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus*. Affection is a magnetic power in evangelistic work, in all efforts to lift and help our fellows. But the power can only be effectually exercised by a pure, or at least a purified, heart ; for purity alone makes affection disinterested and brave, so that it is no mere

¹ Bp. Taylor.

sentimental tenderness, but an influence that heals, strengthens, and wins for God all that it can reach. Secondly, simplicity: the power of being straightforward, candid, open; the gift of getting on to a level with others; of winning the confidence of children and those who are child-like; of finding pleasure in simple tasks, duties, and sources of joy; of speaking and acting naturally, without affectation or self-consciousness. So St. James bids the *double-minded* purify their hearts.¹ Thirdly, gentleness: the Christian grace that is won through victory in the spiritual combat. Gentleness is often the fruit of temptation, as of pain, nobly borne. It springs from personal experience of the hardness of the conflict, fellow-feeling with the tempted, and generous faith in the possible recovery of the fallen.

Last and chief of the blessings of purity is the vision of God: the power of discerning His Presence in His Word, in the ordinances of His Church, in the poor, in common life; the insight which belongs to that beautiful innocence which has been tried but has not been overcome. This is the vision in which here on earth man finds his life and his joy. And hereafter in heaven the pure

¹ St. James iv. 8.

in heart shall see God *as He is*, in the perfection of His essential light and love.

That vision of glory is the supreme guerdon of purity ; but it is also meant to be an incentive and encouragement to those who are striving manfully, though painfully, against sin : *Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.*¹

¹ 1 St. John iii. 3.

XIV.

CHRISTIAN AMBITION.

Wisest of spirits that spirit which dwelleth apart,
Hid in the Presence of God for a chapel and nest,
Sending a wish and a will and a passionate heart
Over the eddy of life to that Presence in rest,
Seated alone and in peace till God bids it arise.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

IT is related of Henry Martyn that when he was entering the Senate House at Cambridge for his final examination, in great agitation of mind, full of eager desire to excel and to fulfil the high hopes which others entertained for him, he was suddenly composed and tranquillised by the recollection of a sermon he happened to have heard not long before on the text: *Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.*¹ In the event he obtained the highest honours, being declared Senior Wrangler before he had reached his twentieth year; but his own comment on his success is instructive: "I obtained my highest wishes,

¹ Jer. xlv. 5.

but was surprised to find that I had grasped a shadow."

This anecdote suggests the question whether "ambition" finds any place among Christian virtues. Now there can be no question that there are things to be striven for, emulations to be encouraged, forms of power to be "earnestly coveted," in the religion of Christ. When the reproach is levelled at Christianity that it insists only on the passive virtues—on patience, endurance, meekness, and the like—it is forgotten that the Son of God became man that men *might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*. As we have already observed, Christian faith is intended to exalt and strengthen the powers of man. Its outcome is a greater intensity of life, a consecration of energies which in the natural sphere, in the competitive struggles of the world, would lead to prominence and to a conspicuous place among men of action and affairs. The cross of Christ is not merely a witness to the power and fruitfulness of suffering; it is a trophy of victory, a battleground on which an invincible Will strives and triumphs. It has taught us, indeed, how to think and speak of this world—its prizes, gifts, methods, aims. But it has crushed the old ambitions of

nature only to make way for new objects and spheres of desire, hope, and activity. There is, then, a Christian *φιλοτιμία*. There are *powers of the world to come*, spiritual and moral forces which are legitimate objects of aspiration. The spirit which Christians have received is no spirit of cowardice, shrinking unworthily from responsibility and toil,¹ but a *spirit of power*, controlling the wills and motives of men, and enabling them for the fulfilment of Divine purposes. It is true that there are caricatures of Christian ambition. Self-assertion and worldliness have often enough ruined a character, and even endangered the work of the Church. The love of position, the thirst for wealth, the restless longing for advancement, the absorbing cares of a much-occupied life, the readiness to use the weapons of the world—uncharitableness, ridicule, passion, scorn—these are no imaginary foes of Christianity. St. Bernard in the twelfth century speaks as if this spirit of false ambition were the prevailing peril of the Church. But our object now is to study Christian ambition in its true form; and in so doing we may place ourselves under the guidance of St. Paul, who thrice uses the Greek word that means “to be ambitious,”

¹ 2 Tim. i. 7.

and whose example seems even more significant than his precept when we consider the mighty display of power which was manifested in the turning of the Gentiles *from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*.¹

Let us hear St. Paul's injunctions.

(1) First he says : *Study* (lit. *be ambitious*) *to be quiet and to do your own business* (1 Thess. iv. 11). The first object of a Christian's ambition is concentration of interests, of purposes, of effort. It is scarcely necessary to point out how marked a feature this is in the work of the Redeemer Himself ; how from the first He steadily set aside the work which He *came not* to do ; how He ever devoted Himself with undistracted energy, with unruffled serenity, to the accomplishment of the work which was given Him to fulfil. He moves tranquilly from place to place, *semper agens, semper quietus*. He passes through this earthly scene

Calm as the march of some majestic cloud,
That o'er wild scenes of ocean war
Holds its still course in heaven afar.²

We discern in Him none of that restless anxiety, that feverish haste, which so often mars our labour

¹ Acts xxvi. 18 ; cp. Rom. xv. 18, 19.

² J. Keble, *Christian Year* : "Advent Sunday."

and robs it of power ; in Him we see no desultoriness, no division of mind, no waste of time, no fruitless expenditure of force. All is done by Him tranquilly, opportunely, thoroughly ; to each task as it comes He gives Himself up with concentrated power ; to each case of need and misery, physical or moral, He attends, as the good Physician, with individual care, with discriminating tenderness, with unhasting pains.

Here, then, is our great example of the method and spirit in which our work, whatever it is, should be done. We need *to be quiet and do our own business*. An age of scientific discovery has taught us that the specialisation of functions is a necessary condition of corporate well-being. The strength of the Church, the welfare of society, the advance of civilisation depend on the vigour with which each individual fulfils his appointed function. Again, an age of criticism, of controversy, of much imperfect education, constantly tempts us to meddle with what does not concern us, and to offer opinions on things we do not understand. There are some whose impulse is to write letters to the papers, to speak in public on every possible occasion, to be constantly airing their thoughts and views on questions of the day. For some

few persons this may be a necessity; but to the vast majority of us the question may well suggest itself whether we do not best serve our Church and nation by having a different ideal—by studying *to be quiet and to do our own business*.

(2) In another passage St. Paul speaks of himself as *making it his aim* (lit. *having an ambition*) *to preach the gospel not where Christ was already named* (Rom. xv. 20). Every Christian should aspire to bring a message of good to mankind—the living gospel of a pure and noble life; “to carry,” as one has said, “the organising force of truth and light into some unreclaimed elements of life.”¹ This is a duty by no means confined to the clergy. Every Christian, we repeat, ought to be not only a disciple but a missionary of Jesus Christ; each one ought, by example, by character, by precept, by acts of love, by ventures of faith, by perseverance in prayer, to draw the souls of men nearer to God. But we must remember what it was that made St. Paul a great “evangelist.” It was personal experience. He had not merely seen the Lord and heard His voice; he had felt the touch of His power. Jesus had, as he tells us in vivid words, *laid hold* of him. He was himself a

¹ Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii. p. 207.

monument of the grace and love of the risen Saviour. Saul of Tarsus was a man whose life had been based on a great mistake and directed by a false ambition ; and the Saviour had pitied him, had shown him mercy, had with one tender word of reproach pierced his conscience, had transfigured him, had made him a new man, an Apostle, a saint, a martyr. When, therefore, he began to preach Christ, he spoke out of the depths of personal experience : *Have I not, he asks, seen Jesus Christ ?*¹

Let me again observe that this "ambition" to evangelise is not to be confined to the ministers of Christ. They, of course, need more than their fellows the warning that unconverted men will strive in vain to convert others. Those who preach the gospel of repentance unto life must themselves know what penitence means ; like St. Paul, they must have seen themselves as they actually are in the sight of infinite holiness and love ; they who proclaim the glory and hope of the Resurrection must have experienced its analogue in their own hearts and lives. But my present point is that every layman, every member of the Church, is bound to use his opportunities

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 1.

of witnessing to Christ, and in order to do so effectually he must have known by experience the power of the gospel, for "speaking broadly and generally the actual experience of one generation creates, under God, the faith of the next. . . . The Divine fire passes from hand to hand, from living men to living men."¹ And if all things belong to Christ, if all regions of thought, all fields of human activity, art and commerce, literature and science, may be ruled by His Spirit and made to minister to the advance of His kingdom, there is surely no Christian who lacks opportunity, direct or indirect, of proclaiming the gospel where Christ is yet unnamed, not yet acknowledged as supreme.

(3) And once more St. Paul uses the verb "to be ambitious," and that in connection with a thought that was never altogether absent from his consciousness—the thought of death and judgment. *We make it our aim, whether at home in the body or absent, to be well-pleasing to Him* (2 Cor. v. 9). It is needless to enlarge on this description of the apostle's aim in life. It has deep interest as revealing the secret of a great career. St. Paul lived and toiled, preached and

¹ R. W. Dale, *The Living Christ and the Four Gospels*, p. 276.

prayed, endured and suffered, with a vivid sense of accountability to an unseen Judge. Let us only notice that the ambition to please God excludes the spirit of party, the desire to please men, the life of self-indulgence—*They that are in the flesh cannot please God*—and the worldly temper which is blind to the tokens of the Divine presence and power. *Without faith it is impossible to please Him.*¹

Let me mention an instance of the single-heartedness which may give dignity and beauty to lives immersed in the vortex of social duties and engagements. Many years ago a young Oxford student visiting Rome took with him an introduction to a distinguished lady of high rank, a devout Catholic, but at the same time holding a prominent position in fashionable society. This lady spoke very freely to her visitor of the prospects and position of the Church in Rome. On some points her views were liberal, like those of other prominent members of the Roman Catholic laity. But her own rule of life, though strict, was invariably simple. "My priest," she said, "is constantly telling me to do this, that, and the other ; but I make it my rule to consider in each case what our Lord would do, and I try to do that."

¹ Rom. viii. 8 ; Heb. xi. 6.

This ambition of seeking above all things and in all things to please God only is one singularly in accord with the character which the English Church aims at forming in its members: reserve, thoroughness, love of reality. She rehearses day by day in our ears the sacred narratives of the Gospels because they present to us the very image of Him who *pleased not Himself*, and who bears record of Himself, *I do always those things that please Him*. The height of a Christian's ambition is to be in all things *as his Master*.

PART II.

I.

THE MEANING AND FRUITS
OF CHURCHMANSHIP.

City of God, how broad and far
Outspread thy walls sublime !
The true thy chartered freemen are,
Of every age and clime.

One holy Church, one army strong,
One stedfast high intent,
One faith and work, one hope and song,
One King omnipotent.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

HITHERTO we have briefly considered certain aspects and duties of personal religion, but it would be a great mistake to imagine that there can be any real antagonism between the life of personal religion and the life of social service in the Church ; between the claims of Christ's body and the interests of the individual soul. "Churchmanship" means my recognition of the fact that the highest gifts of God—the gifts of

truth and grace—reach me only as a member of a society, or household ; that I depend not only for sanctification, but for life itself, on spiritual forces which act upon me through the ministry of my fellow-men, and which flow from the bounty of a Father—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.¹

This image of the “family,” as Frederick Robertson has pointed out,² sufficiently shows that the Church is based not upon “similarity of taste or identity of opinion, but upon *affinities of nature*.” The Church is no mere voluntary association or combination of persons who happen to think alike, or agree to act together, but a family, based on facts of *nature* ; a family, sharing a life derived from a common source, bound together by common ties and traditions, inspired by the same ideas, and possessed by the same spirit. *There is one body and one spirit.*³ Through the body flows the tide of a Divine life ; within it spiritual forces are at work, moulding, renewing, invigorating the character of each individual member. For as in the family—as in the nation

¹ Eph. iii. 14.

² *Sermons*, Series 3, No. XV.

³ Eph. iv. 4.

itself—so in the Church, the individual man realises his freedom, learns his needs and limitations, advances toward the fulfilment of all his possibilities; and all this is brought about by the salutary discipline of corporate life. Through the different relationships in which we find ourselves placed as members of the Church—our relationships to the weak and the strong, to the learned and the ignorant, to equals and superiors, to fellow-workers and dependents, to Almighty God above us and the world around us—through these we are trained and educated for the work of life on earth and for the larger ministries of heaven. Born anew in baptism, and thereby incorporated into the family of God, we draw our life from above, we are fed, nurtured, disciplined, till we are of an age to understand that we are called not only to receive, but to communicate the gifts of God; to glorify God by serving men; to *go on unto perfection* by actively exercising the energies of brotherly love. The baptism of infants is, as our Prayer Book asserts, a “charitable work,” because it lifts the helpless infant out of its solitude, and brings it into the sheltering warmth of a holy fellowship, in which at each stage of life it will find new spiritual gifts awaiting it, and

each need provided for by a fresh "means of grace." Yes; the individual soul in its solitariness and frailty learns to realise its true dignity, is enabled to fulfil its true function and to find its true development, through fellowship in the society to which, by right of spiritual birth, it belongs.

This is, roughly speaking, the meaning of Churchmanship; and we shall best understand its fruits if we follow the line of thought suggested by certain images under which the Church is presented to us in the pages of the New Testament. Thus, if the Church be a *household* or *family*, membership in it will convey all the blessings of home life—peace, security, sure maintenance, educational influence. Life in the Church will involve a constant discipline in self-forgetfulness, humility, tenderness, tolerance; for within the circle of the family there is usually a wide diversity of tastes, opinions, and temperaments, and each member needs the help and support that another can supply. Family life, in its normal form, implies differences of age, pursuits, and character; the family includes its honourable and its more feeble members, each of whom has a natural claim upon the respect and forbearance of the rest, each of whom is bound to have *the*

*same care one for another.*¹ So in the family of God there is room for diverse types of human character, and all that each can contribute, the Church consecrates to the service of the whole body. "In the Church of God there is a place—and that the noblest—for Dorcas making garments for the poor, and for Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, just as truly as there is for Elijah confounding a false religion by his noble opposition; for John the Baptist making a king tremble on his throne; or for the apostle Paul 'compassing sea and land' by his wisdom and his heroic deeds."²

Again, the Church may be conceived as the "city of God" and its members as *fellow-citizens of the saints*.³ This image not only implies that Churchmen have mutual duties—intercession, co-operation, self-sacrifice, active compassion;⁴ it also serves powerfully to kindle patriotic ardour and enthusiasm for the cause of God. A Churchman is a citizen of *no mean city*. He is called to play his appropriate part in a long and noble history; he shares ideals which have inspired great deeds in every age; he inherits the splendid hopes, the

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 25.

² F. W. Robertson, *ubi sup.*

³ Eph. ii. 19; cp. Phil. i. 27, iii. 20.

⁴ Cp. Clem. Rom., *Ad Cor.*, chaps. 54-56.

accumulated power, of those heroic spirits who from time to time *through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, . . . out of weakness were made strong.*¹ A chivalrous devotion to their city, a steady zeal for its honour, an ardent longing for its internal peace and unity, readiness to fight its battles, willingness to toil and suffer on its behalf—all these are implied in that true Churchmanship which St. Paul describes when he says to the Christians of Philippi, *Behave as citizens in a fashion worthy of the gospel of Christ.*²

The Church then consecrates, heightens, and educates the deepest social instincts of man: those instincts which find their satisfaction in the fellowship of the family, in the order and security of a stable commonwealth, in the growth and slow consolidation of nationality. But, after all, the image of an organism, a body, goes even deeper than the metaphor of the household or the city. The Church is the very body of the risen Saviour, which, living by the power of His indwelling Spirit, is the visible organ of His Presence and Sovereignty in the world. *Ye are the body of Christ*, writes St. Paul, *and severally members*

¹ Heb. xi. 33, 34

² Phil. i. 27 (R.V. marg.).

thereof.¹ And if it be true, according to the sublime saying of a famous Schoolman, that "Every creature of God is a theophany," it cannot be less true that every Churchman, in so far as he is faithful to his calling, manifests Christ: Christ separate from sinners, yet ever in healing contact with the sin-stricken world; Christ dwelling *in the bosom of the Father*, yet stooping to share the lot of the lowliest; Christ living unto God for evermore, yet awake to the needs of the poorest and to the prayer of the humblest. Where a true Churchman moves and works among men, the saying of the Master is surely fulfilled, *Whosoever receiveth you receiveth Me*.

A word in conclusion :

How magnificent is the purpose which breathes in the great commission, *Make disciples of all the nations, baptising them!* How it excludes all that is partial, sectarian, or merely nationalistic in our conception of the Church! How it justifies the boldness of that utterance of the great American preacher—

"It is an ideal society which Christ contemplated when He established the Christian Church. In other words, the Church is simply the ideal world.

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 27.

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A perfect Church would be a perfect world. The Church is imperfect so long as it is not conterminous with the world.”¹ Is it not true that we must labour and pray for the perfection of the Church, before our eyes can hope to behold a perfect society—a society so conformed to the will of God, so permeated by the one spirit of holiness, truth, and love, that it will be in fact *a perfect man*,² having grown to the full measure of the stature of Christ Himself?

¹ A. V. G. Allen, *Life of Phillips Brooks*, vol. ii. p. 354.

² Eph. iv. 13.

II.

INTERCESSION.

Ask all thou need'st, a worthier life to live :
Nor ask for self alone ; He bids thee dare
All, whom thy love can reach, enfold in prayer.

W. BRIGHT.

THE distinguishing mark of the true Christian is love. *By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*¹ And if, as we have already reminded ourselves, the love of God is the motive which impels the Christian's will, the love of Christ must be the law which practically guides his conduct. As St. John says : *He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*² Nay, we have the word of the Master Himself : *I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*³

The love of Christ, then, furnishes the law accord-

¹ St. John xiii. 35.

² 1 St. John iii. 16.

³ St. John xiii. 15.

ing to which brotherly love should operate, and in this matter we have to consider our Lord's teaching and His own present work. First, He Himself taught us a prayer, into the very texture of which is woven intercession. Each petition of the Lord's Prayer includes others besides the suppliant. It assumes that others with us are children of our heavenly Father ; it asks that others with us may hallow His Name, that His Church may be extended till it embraces humanity, that hindrances to the progress of His kingdom may everywhere be removed, that all mankind may embrace and fulfil His will ; that none may lack sustenance, grace, forgiveness ; that none may be overwhelmed by temptation, or *overcome of evil*. The whole prayer is so framed that we cannot use it without, at least in words, praying for others beside ourselves. But, further, what is the ascended and glorified Christ now doing? What is His present work but that of intercession? *He ever liveth to make intercession.*¹ Our great Intercessor invites every member of His redeemed Church to join with Him in His ministerial service. His sacrifice, once offered for the sins of the whole world, gives availing power to our feeble prayers ; and if we are partakers of His

¹ Heb. vii. 2 .

earthly life of self-sacrifice, we are called also to share in His heavenly work of intercession. To be in this way fellow-workers with the ascended Lord is a privilege of wonderful dignity and (if rightly exercised) of availing power ; for whatsoever we ask according to His will, He heareth us : *We know that we have the petitions that we have desired of Him.*¹

To pray for others, then, is a Christian duty ; it is a token of the love we owe to our brethren ; it is the necessary effect of the presence in our hearts of the Holy Spirit of grace. But we may remember also that to offer *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men* is a thing good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.² If we steadily set before ourselves the revealed will of God as our law of life, our prayers must necessarily widen their range in proportion as we come to understand more deeply the purposes of Him *who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* Besides, we are members one of another ; no man liveth or dieth to himself, and the welfare of the whole body of human society depends upon the exertions of each individual member. Thus Tertullian, in his famous

¹ 1 St. John v. 15.

² 1 Tim. ii. 1.

Apology, justifies the intercessions of the Christian Church on grounds even of social expediency. "We are continually praying," he says, "for all emperors, imploring for them a long life, dominions secure, a safe household, brave armies, a loyal senate, a righteous people, a world free from strife, and the fulfilment of whatever desires each may have, whether as man or as emperor."¹

It is obvious, indeed, that godlessness, irreligion, immorality, in any section of the community, must vitally affect the health of the whole; but the spirit of love is not impelled by mere considerations of expediency. "We ought to desire," cries Augustine, "that all men with us may love God."² Because *love worketh no ill to his neighbour*, because it can withhold no good, therefore Christians should rejoice to take their part in the intercessions of the Church, and to unite themselves thereby to Him who intercedes with prevailing might in heaven.

Now intercession, as we have seen, is a duty, but it is neglected by many for different reasons. There are some who are selfish in their view of religion; they are absorbed in the thought of their own spiritual needs; they are intent on saving

¹ Tert., *Apol.*, 30.

² Aug., *de Doctrina Chr.*, i. 29.

their own souls. They do not, of course, forget their own immediate circle of relations and friends, but they ignore the fact that they belong to a body—to the family of God ; that the needs of one are the needs of many, and that the spiritual health of even a single soul depends on the well-being of the whole Church. They forget also that God's purposes are primarily for the Church—the entire people of God, and that they only embrace the individual as a member of the community which stands in covenant relationship to Himself. Others shrink from intercession from worthier, but still mistaken, motives. They feel that it would be presumptuous for them—with their own crying spiritual needs—to plead the cause of others. They are not sure of their own acceptance. *We know*, they say sorrowfully, *that God heareth not sinners*. Yet these, if they only realised it, have just the very qualification that intercession demands. They have love. The very trouble they feel in the sense of their own unworthiness springs from love : for to be troubled by our sins, to grieve that we do not sorrow for them more earnestly, to have a deep-seated sense of unworthiness—this means the dawn of love in the heart, and love will prompt intercession for others. For, after all, the one thing

that really holds us back from the work of intercession is lack of love. If we do not honestly care for the welfare of others, if we are not interested in them or their wants, it does not naturally occur to us to pray for them. But we may be sure of this, that such selfishness empties of value even prayer for our own needs ; it makes the repetition of the Lord's Prayer an empty and heartless form. If our religion is selfish we have reason to fear that it is unreal, not to say dead. Not to love is not to live.

But we may go further, and say with confidence that the habit of prayer for others is full of blessing for him who prays, full of power on behalf of those for whom the prayer is offered.

(1) The habit of intercession developes the spirit of love in him who prays. It increases charity ; it expands the power of sympathy ; it gives a man *wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart* ;¹ it makes him patient, liberal, far-sighted, and interested in the loftiest things. And fresh interests develope hopefulness. Intercession, as Dr. Pusey once said, is an antidote to the paralysing temper of pessimism—the temper that says, “ Things always have been bad, and always

¹ 1 Kings iv. 29.

will be." Prayer for others is the remedy for apathy, half-heartedness, and despair. Of all our English Church worthies, one of the noblest and most attractive in character is Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, and he has left us in his *Devotions* a clue to the secret of his life—to his serene cheerfulness, his calm evenness of mind, his tenderness of heart, his unfailing charity. He devoted a large proportion of his time to prayer, and especially to the work of intercession.¹ In the ancient liturgies of the Church he found his models; he caught their spirit; he looked upon the world with eyes of Christ-like compassion. "There is no class of men," writes Dean Church, "no condition, no relation of life, no necessity or emergency of it, which does not at one time or another rise up before his memory and claim his intercession; none for which he does not see a place in the order of God's world, and find a refuge under the shadow of His wing."² He "surveys the great mass of suffering humanity with the keen eye of pastoral compassion, and commends all sorts and conditions of men to their Creator with trustful faith." The character of Andrewes shows how intercession educates in sym-

¹ Bishop Andrewes is said to have spent five hours a day in prayer.

² R. W. Church, *Masters in English Theology*, p. 104.

pathy him who prays, how it enlarges his interests, quickens his insight into the needs and conditions of the lowliest, and gives substance and reality to the thought, *I am debtor* unto all men.

(2) Finally, a word may be added as to the prevailing power of intercessory prayer. We do not know the marvels which it is daily bringing to pass in the Church of God. What an uplifting thought it is for those who are prevented by circumstances from taking, as they would say, "any active part" in the work of promoting the Kingdom of God on earth, that Prayer is Power! By means of intercession the lowliest Christian may *come to the help of the Lord against the mighty*. The Church, it has been said, "cannot do her active work without the help of men of prayer." St. Paul plainly felt his need of such support when he besought the Ephesians to *pray always, not only for all saints, but also for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly*.¹ *Pray for us*, he says elsewhere, *that the word of the Lord may run, and be glorified*. Those who are toiling in the barren places of God's vineyard—lonely, wearied and depressed; those who are jeopardizing their lives in *the high places of the field*; those who are

¹ Eph. vi. 18, 19; cp. 2 Thess. iii. 1.

engaged in some conspicuous and arduous work, political, social, or religious; those who suffer, those who labour; those who plant and those who water—all alike may be sustained, cheered, strengthened by the secret prayers of thousands whose names they will never know on earth. It may be that in far-off lands, in quiet and solitary places, “unnumbered fellow-labourers are striving from day to day to lighten their sorrows and to cheer their loneliness.”¹ And if we consider St. Paul’s great aphorism, *all things are your’s*,² we shall be continually enlarging the range of our intercessions, with an ever-increasing faith that

More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of.

He who prays for others sets in motion *powers of the world to come* which manifest themselves not only in the Church, but in what we call “secular history.” Like the Hebrew prophet, the Christian intercessor is in a real sense set *over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant*.³ There can be no nobler or more fruitful service

¹ Bp. Westcott, *Lessons from Work*, p. 208.

² 1 Cor. iii. 21.

³ Jer. i. 10; cp. Tert., *Apol.*, 32.

rendered to mankind than is wrought by prayer: and, as Tertullian points out in his treatise *De Oratione*, "As to times of prayer nothing at all has been enjoined, save that we should simply pray at all times and in every place."¹

¹ *De Orat.*, 13.

III.

ALMSGIVING.

We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be :
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

To comfort and to bless,
To find a balm for woe,
To tend the lone and fatherless,
Is Angels' work below.

W. WALSHAM HOW.

DEVOTION toward God, loving-kindness to man, the discipline of self—these are the three great departments of Christian duty, the great aims of Christian life. In the teaching of Christ, however, we cannot but be struck with the practical prominence assigned to the fulfilment of duty to man. When He bids the young ruler *keep the commandments*, He confines Himself to mentioning those comprised in the second table of the Decalogue.¹ And it is a matter for very solemn

¹ St. Matt. xix. 17, 18, and parallel passages.

consideration that in the judgment scene of Matt. xxv. 31 and following verses, the standard by which human character is tested is observance or neglect of the law of philanthropy. We may also recollect that a special spiritual efficacy is attributed to "almsgiving," not only in certain later portions of the Old Testament, but even in a saying of Christ Himself.¹ Almsgiving in its widest sense is in fact a true "means of grace," a factor in spiritual and moral progress. Thus Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, eloquently describes it as *salutaris operatio, solatium grande credentium, munimentum spei, tutela fidei, medela peccati, corona pacis*.² But this line of thought is not here to be further pursued. Charity needs to be guarded from any suspicion of being influenced by self-regarding motives.

Almsgiving, then, is a type of all works of mercy, and is practically equivalent to that active kindness which every man owes to his fellow-men. The primary and literal sense of almsgiving is not excluded by the wider use of the word here implied. Unquestionably there are very many who neglect the duty of giving away a fixed

¹ St. Luke xi. 41.

² Cyprian, *De Opere et Elccmesynis*, c. xxvi.

proportion of their income, without real excuse and to their own moral loss. Sometimes the habit, contracted when young, of "enjoying the personal luxury of wealth, while the responsibility of property is relegated to the father of the house, is not unlikely to follow young people into their early married life."¹ More often, however, the duty of almsgiving, in spite of the important place it holds in the teaching of Christ, is simply forgotten or ignored by Christian preachers.

Let us turn, however, to the larger aspects of almsgiving, and consider the grounds and scope of Christ's law of philanthropy.

We may note, first, that the motive of true charity is the desire to imitate God. The fatherly bounty of God is the Christian's model, and this at once suggests the thought that active love will always be guided by wisdom. It will be considerate and discriminating, and not merely lavish and generous. St. James tells us that God gives *simply*, and accordingly he that giveth is enjoined to give *with simplicity*,² *i.e.* with a generous recognition of another's need and a free hand in ministering to it. But a Christian will not neglect

¹ See *Helps to Holiness*, by the late Rev. C. W. Furse, Canon of Westminster.

² St. James i. 5 ; cp. Rom. xii. 8.

the teachings of wisdom and experience. Inconsiderate almsgiving, which takes no account of the circumstances, position, and character of the person needing relief, is not true charity, but often a selfish attempt to get rid of a feeling of personal distress at the sight of need and suffering.

The main point, however, is that which the writer of *Ecce Homo* so admirably enforces in his seventeenth chapter. A Christian imbued with his Master's spirit will be fired by the "enthusiasm of humanity." He will patiently, and with a grave sense of responsibility, study the condition of the world around him. He will not "make philanthropy the amusement of his leisure, but one of the occupations of his life." He will not be satisfied that his social duty is discharged when he has flung an alms to the poor at his gate. In fact, "no man who loves his kind can in these days rest content with waiting as a servant upon human misery, when it is, in so many cases, possible to anticipate and avert it. Prevention is better than cure, and it is now clear to all that a large part of human suffering is preventible by improved social arrangements. Charity will now, if it be genuine, fix upon this enterprise as greater, more widely and permanently beneficial, and therefore *more*

Christian than the other." In dealing with the sick, the suffering, the destitute, modern charity will carefully study the causes of the malady, physical or social, that needs relief. It will avail itself of all that trained experience or well-informed opinion can suggest. Social science and political economy have opened to us aspects of human life and conceptions of social duty which were necessarily unknown to the first generations of Christians. A Christian, therefore, will not simply "stick to the New Testament," as if that contained infallible rules of conduct; he will rather endeavour to drink more deeply of Christ's spirit, and will accordingly act on the conviction that the progress of science and civilisation is a real revelation of the will and mind of God.

Lastly, we may remember that true Christian charity is only one aspect of a great principle which the teaching of Jesus clearly enunciates, viz. the principle of stewardship. This is the truth contained in the trite maxim, "Charity begins at home." The foundation of wise philanthropy lies in the conscientious administration of business, in considerateness toward those whom we employ, in a serious sense of duty in regard to the acquisition and expenditure of wealth, in punctual payment of

personal debts, etc. The neglect of these things is commonly the cause of much social distress and disorder. "Thus the roots of charity lie in the larger problem of the industrial order, and the most unquestionable and most effective philanthropy is to be found in industrial justice, progress, and peace."¹

¹ Professor F. G. Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 245. Every Christian interested in social questions should study this excellent book, which, as Canon Scott Holland has said (*The Commonwealth*, August, 1901), is "exactly the book that we want." Bishop Westcott's paper on *Expenditure* should also be read (*Lessons from Work*, p. 341 foll.)

IV.

THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY.

The Sundays of man's life,
Threaded together on time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternal glorious King.
On Sunday heaven's gate stands ope ;
Blessings are plentiful and rife,
More plentiful than hope.

G. HERBERT.

LIKE the rest of the Decalogue, the fourth Commandment embodies a law of our true nature. The obligation to observe Sunday does not rest upon the letter of the Commandment. On the contrary, the rigid observance of the Sabbath was by early Christians regarded as a sign of Judaistic reaction. "No longer," exclaims Ignatius in his epistle to the Magnesians—"no longer observe the Sabbath, but live in accordance with the spirit of the Lord's Day." The new title "Lord's Day" marks the change that came over the old-world institution of the Sabbath when the Incarnation

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had made "all things new." The first day of the week was marked out by the Resurrection as the "Lord's Day," a day which, as compared with the Jewish Sabbath, represents a different spirit and a different idea, commemorating not the Creation, but the Resurrection, speaking not merely of rest, but of worship, devotion, aspiration. Thus the old formal observance was abrogated because a spiritual principle had taken its place—the principle that our time, like everything else that we possess, is to be consecrated to God. The dedication of the firstfruits is a symbol of the sacredness of the whole.

One aspect of the fourth Commandment is apt to be overlooked, namely, the sanction which it gives to the "law of labour." *Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.* Christ re-enforces, by express precept and by His personal example, the law of work. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* There was a time when it could honestly be said that the great danger of the Anglo-Saxon race was "intemperate labour," and it is not without significance that, in England at least, the legislation of the past sixty years has largely been directed toward the restriction and proper regulation of labour. Other tendencies are perhaps

more marked at the present time : the thirst for pleasure and excitement, the impatience of drudgery and routine, the haste which mars good workmanship, the love of gain which robs it of moral worth. And since it is undeniable that where there is much wealth there is apt to be *abundance of idleness*, it may be well to remind ourselves that the New Testament nowhere speaks of abstinence from labour as an essential part of Sabbath observance. On the contrary, the promise *His servants shall serve Him*, like the parable of the Talents, sets before us as the reward of labour not the cessation of toil, but ampler, nobler scope for the exertion of our highest powers.

As regards Sunday observance, we may notice that the New Testament connects the first day of the week with the idea of worship, and worship is of course facilitated by abstinence from labour. Accordingly the principles which underlie the fourth Commandment, so far as it is binding on Christians, are two. Sunday—the Lord's Day—is to be a day of consecration, and a day of rest from ordinary toil. *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. . . . In it thou shalt do no manner of work.*

(1) The Law of *Consecration*—what is its meaning

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and scope? If we consider the Jewish Law, we find that the institution of the Sabbath illustrates one great principle of the whole Mosaic system : that of election, separation, consecration. "Through all the provinces of human life," says Dr. Dale, "the same idea ran, viz. that God claimed the world as His own," and "the sign that men owned that claim was to be through their separation of a portion."¹ The consecration of one day in seven to the special service of God is not only a convenient means of securing for the highest of all objects a rightful place in men's thoughts ; it is a recognition of our duty to serve God truly "all the days of our life," an acknowledgment that our time belongs to Him, and that for our worthy or unworthy use of it we are responsible to Him. As we have already seen, the worship of Almighty God is the noblest act in which man's faculties can be engaged ; it is an indispensable element in true human life, and the observance of Sunday is man's opportunity for realising his own higher life, for possessing his soul, for setting steadily before himself the thought whence he comes and whither he tends. It is the day when the highest faculties in us should have free play : the day when we should

¹ R. W. Dale, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 59 foll.

seek and choose all that lifts us heavenward—the solemn services of the Church, the hearing and reading of God's Word, the uplifting delights of good art, literature, and music, the glories of nature—indeed *whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. All things are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*¹

Yet, while we remember that for a Christian *all things are lawful*, we must bear in mind that some things may be wrong or inexpedient for us if not for others. If to play games, or indulge in outdoor sports, really fits a man better for his week's work than quieter forms of recreation, let him with a good conscience follow his inclination. But let him *be fully persuaded in his own mind* that this is the case. There can be no question that the ostentatious misuse of the Lord's Day as an extra day of pleasure and dissipation is not only a wanton outrage to the feelings and convictions of many good persons, but is also a gross abuse of sacred privileges. Once in the week comes a chance of rising above the routine of everyday life, with its toils, cares, and trivialities, and of soaring into a higher and fairer world; and men waste the opportunity by selfishly indulging in

¹ Phil. iv. 8; 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

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vulgar pleasures which leave them unsatisfied and unrefreshed, and interfere with the peace or leisure of their neighbours.

(2) And this leads us to speak of the Law of *Rest*. The Sabbath rest, which is offered to us in this life, and which is set before us in Scripture as the final hope of man, means something more divine than mere cessation of toil. If Sunday is not a mere day of selfish pleasure (Isa. lviii. 13), still less is it a day of idleness and sloth. *The Sabbath was made for man*. It is a day on which we are to remember the claims of our own higher nature and the physical and moral needs of others. To forget, for instance, the rightful claims of servants and others whom we employ—to inflict on them unnecessary work without a compensating holiday—is a social sin. To the ancient Jew the Sabbath was a day of bounty; to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself it was a day specially devoted, as it seems, to works of mercy and charity; to Christians, therefore, it is not a day of self-pleasing, but a day devoted to the service of God and to acts of neighbourly loving-kindness. For what Christians seek for themselves, they will strive to secure for others. That Sunday shall be to the toiling multitudes a day of rest and refreshment—

that it shall provide those who cannot or will not think about God with opportunities of hearing His Name and learning something of His goodness—this is a worthy object for any Christian to set before himself. How such a Sunday—such a “Sabbath for man”—might be secured, it is not difficult to see. There must be wise laws providing for the due restriction of trading and work;¹ there must be generosity on the part of the well-to-do, opening to the poor opportunities of healthy recreation and enjoyment; above all, there must be the spirit of Christian love—holding back each individual from those pursuits or pleasures that scandalise his neighbours or interfere with his leisure, and prompting each *to bear the infirmities of the weak, and to please his neighbour for his good to edification.*²

¹ Cp. the Rev. S. A. Barnett, *The Service of God* (sermon on *Sunday Observance*).

² Rom. xv. 1, 2.

V.

THE SERVICE OF MAN.

We must be here to work ;
And men who work can only work for men,
And, not to work in vain, must comprehend
Humanity, and, so, work humanly,
And raise men's bodies still by raising souls,
As God did, first.

E. B. BROWNING.

CHRISTIANITY not only introduced into the world a new idea of God as a Being of self-sacrificing love ; it created a new conception of goodness. It taught that "goodness" consists in the imitation of Him who is kind even *to the unthankful and the evil*, who *sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*. And whether Christ be acknowledged by men as their Lord and Master or not, no one is now called or considered "good" who does not in some form or other exhibit the spirit of brotherly love and social service. No professing Christian, at least, can consistently forget those two short

biographies of the Master—*He pleased not Himself. He went about doing good.*

Something has been said in connection with "Almsgiving" concerning the transformation and enlargement of the idea of social duty which is implied in our Lord's teaching. As was ever His habit, He illustrated the law of service and self-sacrifice by pointing to familiar scenes and transactions. In one parable He describes the faithful servant diligently using the talents entrusted to him; in another He depicts the pitiful traveller, ministering to the needs of a wounded stranger whom chance had thrown in his way, and who had no other claim on him than that of simple humanity. *Go*, said Jesus to His hearer, *and do thou likewise.*

From one of these parables may be inferred the law of stewardship; from the other the duty of compassion. (1) The law of stewardship. We are accountable not only for what we do, but for what we possess. We are debtors unto every man, for every man is our neighbour. *Proximus omni homini omnis homo.* Thus our money is given us in trust—there is a "Gospel of wealth;" our time is given us for fruitful work our gifts, whether knowledge, culture, character, or physical

strength, are ours only that through them others may be enriched. "A man," it has been well said, "has only a right to do what he *ought* with his own." A man owes to the community—he owes to God—the right use of *the things*, whatever they may be, *that he possesseth*. The Christian law of stewardship supersedes the old conventional conception of irresponsible "rights of property."

(2) The duty of compassion. Every man is my neighbour, and I am neighbour to every man that needs my service ; and Christ Himself has taught us that the essence of the "neighbourly" spirit is the temper of mercy. The true neighbour of the wounded man was *he that shewed mercy on him*. The Samaritan's goodness is held up as the fulfilment of an obligation which is rooted in the nature of things ; compassion, in fact, is an element in the perfection of manhood. It is, says Bishop Butler, "a call, a demand of nature, to relieve the unhappy ; as hunger is a natural call for food." "Pain and sorrow and misery have a right to our assistance : compassion puts us in mind of the debt, and that we owe it to ourselves as well as to the distressed." But no dry, abstract considerations can appeal to conscience with half the force that lies in the example of God Himself.

Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another, says St. Paul. *Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee ?*¹ is the question of the Master Himself.

These are commonplaces of religion, on which it is needless to enlarge in addressing Christians. Indeed, there is no fear that "the service of man" in these days will lapse or be forgotten. A great wave of pity has swept over the Church and even over society in recent years. Great things are being done and attempted. Works of mercy, infinitely various in form and scope, are everywhere in progress. "Good-will is now the dictator of policy, and the question most often asked is, 'What can I do to improve the condition of my neighbours?'" But the wisest and most observant judges tell us that the manifold service rendered has, to some extent, missed the mark; it has been fitful, uncontrolled by principle, lacking in true reverence and in the sense of proportion; it has not been inspired, as it ought to be, by the highest Christian motive—by the Love of God and the desire, in serving man, to serve Him.

We may, then, profitably consider how our efforts may be made more effective, how philanthropic

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 9; St. Matt. xviii. 33.

work may be filled with larger power, how our charity may reap a richer harvest ; in a word, how our "service of man" may become more entirely Christian in aim and spirit.

First of all, our work for men must be controlled by the sense of duty to God. The mere thought of God will act as a stimulus if we are tempted to excuse ourselves from social service by our ignorance or helplessness, or lack of means. It will rebuke the temper of apathy and despair. But my present point is that faith in God will educate our social sympathies, and dictate, to some extent, the particular methods of service we employ. The Love of God will be at once our inspiration and our model. Much of our charity fails because it is so unlike the Love of God. For instance, our charity is often *partial*—selecting its objects without any clear principle of choice ; passing over the unattractive, the uninteresting, the repellent ; making the ingratitude or the unreceptiveness of some an excuse for dropping them ; devoting itself to the work which it finds congenial ; lacking in the sense of indebtedness, not to one or two, but *to all men*. Again, our charity is, as we know by sad experience, often *unwise*. The Love of God is far-sighted. It sees deep into the roots of the

social evils which need healing. It finds typical expression in our Lord's dealings with the paralytic. It sets the disease of the soul above the malady of the body. Love says, *Son, thy sins be forgiven thee*, before it says, *Arise, and walk*. And here is something that rebukes our impulsiveness. We are too apt to deal, not with causes, but with symptoms. We give unintelligently, inconsiderately, and the result is more pauperism, and, what is worse, more poverty of character, more greed, cunning, and shiftlessness. We think that we are "relieving" distress, when in reality we are degrading him whom we "relieve" by "sympathy with his lower self."¹ In our haste, we lose the spirit of reverence; we fail in that which alone can raise men to better things—in respect for their true manhood. "Do you really believe," asked some one of the late Bishop Westcott, "that the savage is your equal?" "I believe," the bishop replied, "that Christ died for him, and bore his nature to the Father's throne." Something of this way of looking at even the lowest and most degraded is absolutely necessary for those who would do them good. Once more, our charity has failed through *impatience*. It is often fitful.

¹ The Rev. S. A. Barnett, *The Service of God*, p. 247.

"It seeks the excitement of change and looks for surprises. It backs a scheme one year with £100,000, and drops it altogether next year. It expects in return for a subscription to see a social revolution. . . . Charitable people too often show the spirit of the gambler—the impatience of slow gain, the longing to get great result for small effort, the love of excitement." ¹

What we chiefly need in our service of man is to drink deep of the love of God. We should then think less of our failures or successes, and more of Him and His purposes. We should be steadied by the thought of the patience with which He is content to wait for the accomplishment of "the thousandth part of His vast plan ;" we should undertake the humblest social work as part of our duty to Him ; we should care for the distressed and the degraded more impartially and more wisely ; we should deal with them as beings with a capacity for higher than bodily satisfactions ; we should treat them reverently and hopefully ; we should give them something better than silver or gold. Like St. Peter, we should give them *such as we have* : attention, care, sympathy, honour, brotherly love.

¹ The Rev. S. A. Barnett, *The Service of God*, p. 247.

In the second place, our service of man will be effective in proportion as we are guided and inspired by a sense of union with Christ. We have need to carry His Presence with us as we go about *doing good*, to rest in the thought that whosoever receives us, receives Him. How would the recollection that we bear Christ with us give us calmness, gentleness, and hopefulness in ministering to distress! How would it nerve and encourage us in our conflict with social evils and public wrongs! To estimate men aright, and to judge wisely of their sorrows, burdens, and failures, we need to maintain ourselves in the company of Him who *knew what was in man*. From the many personal interviews recorded in the Gospels we may learn, not indeed rules for relieving bodily distress, but the true principles of dealing with human character. The modern science of social economics, in teaching us that man is not merely a money-making animal, but a normal being capable of response to higher motives than those of mere self-interest, has sent us anew to the school of Christ. In the Gospels we learn to catch the spirit of the Master, and to enter into His mind. We come to understand that, even for the worker himself, to *be* is more than to *do*.

We learn that "time is not wasted which is spent in thought ; time is best spent which is spent in prayer ;" that "a lowly, loving character both does most and knows most ;"¹ that before achievement come obedience, submission, and the power to wait.

It was long ago prophesied by de Tocqueville that the problems which would disturb the world at the close of the nineteenth century would be social rather than political, and his prediction has been verified. The hearts of men everywhere are occupied with the needs and claims of suffering populations, and the Church, as the spiritual organ of human society, has roused herself to take the lead in grappling with the social disorders of the age. She has realised anew her mission to be, what Bishop Ken calls her, "the catholic seminary of Divine love." And in the fulfilment of her task she opens wide arms of compassion to the neediest and the most wretched. She waits upon the condemned criminal ; she strives to bring light and healing into the "dens of filthiest freedom." She perpetuates her Master's work in preaching the gospel to the poor ; she is "tender to ignorance as to all forms of poverty ;" she strives to assuage

¹ Barnett, p. 261.

even the worst human ills, but she ever bears in mind that the real root of social disorder is sin. "It is because the world has lost its Father that it is in sorrow. It wants, not on the one hand, philosophy about its Father—that is theology ; nor, on the other hand, food, clothing, and shelter or even instruction how to get along in this short earthly life—that is philanthropy and ethical culture. It wants its Father and its home."¹ He who would minister to the needs of the world must have learned in the school of Christ to penetrate to the true causes of its age-long sorrow.

¹ Dr. Lyman Abbott.

VI.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.

And so these twain, upon the skirts of time,
Sit side by side, full summ'd in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other ev'n as those who love.

A. TENNYSON.

IN this book we are concerned exclusively with matters of personal and practical religion, and it is from this point of view that I approach the subject of marriage—that sacred state of life which, for the vast majority of mankind, is the divinely appointed school of character, the sphere in which personality is trained for social service on earth, and for the larger and nobler ministries of the life beyond death.

We cannot, indeed, altogether ignore the sorrowful fact that, though the best and wisest minds

have agreed in holding that family life is the special home of those virtues which build up and invigorate nations, we nevertheless find the institution of marriage menaced, even in professedly Christian States, by two opposite forces: on the one hand, by the force of selfish individualism, chafing at the restraints which marriage imposes on liberty of desire and action; on the other, by the force of a socialistic theory which finds in the family an insuperable obstacle to its cherished ideal of a corporate life, in which personal interests are to be sacrificed to the welfare of the community. According to this theory, "The thrift, economies, and centralised interest of the isolated home tend to detach those who are devoted to such homes from complete devotion to the socialist ideal."¹ In brief, a self-seeking individualism objects to indissoluble marriage as a vexatious restraint upon personal liberty; the advocates of a certain type of Socialism would abolish it as a stronghold of individualism.

In a short paper like this, no good purpose would be served by a superficial and inadequate discussion of the "marriage problem," viewed in relation to the actual condition of society. At present

¹ Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 140.

few would deny that the sanctity of marriage is threatened chiefly from the individualistic side. It is needless to dwell on the ominous significance of recent divorce statistics. In America, it is confessed by thoughtful observers that the facility with which marriage can be dissolved constitutes a danger which menaces the very existence of home life and even the stability of the nation. While, however, we admit that narrow self-interest and lawless desire are, to a very great extent, responsible for this alarming state of things, we must also remember that the problem to be faced is closely connected with other social disorders: that the congestion of population in great centres of industry has produced conditions which have to a great extent destroyed the very possibility of home life; that for large masses of working people the blessings of true marriage are practically impossible; that even where it is possible, people shrink from the burdens and obligations which married life involves. Considerations of this kind are doubtless present to the minds of those who are taking part in the present discussion of the thorny problems connected with marriage and divorce. Here, however, I must simply confine myself to a brief survey of those essential principles

which are involved in the Christian conception of marriage.

The present discussions are, at any rate, making one fact luminously clear: namely, that the teaching of our Lord on the subject of marriage runs clean contrary to the theories which are supposed to justify the facilitation of divorce. He traces the desire for separation, and the possible necessity for it, to no other root than human *sin*. The only exception to the strictness of His law (an admittedly doubtful exception) is a concession in favour of one on whom another's sin has brought unmerited suffering. His utterances on the subject, it is manifest, are not designed to correct the anomalies and wrongs incident to human civilisation; they form part of His teaching as the Founder of the Kingdom of God. He is concerned not with the facts of human life as it is, but with the ideal principles that might, if faithfully observed, regenerate society. His teaching is severe because it contemplates the perfection of our race. To Him, all human relationships are part of a spiritual order. He "views the problem of marriage, like other social problems, from above—in the large horizon of the purposes of God."¹

¹ Peabody, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

According to the Christian view of marriage, its importance lies chiefly, of course, in the fact that it is a permanent relationship, not a mere temporary contract terminable at will ; that it is a state of life involving the actual fusion of two personalities. The married are *no more twain, but one flesh*. And the permanence of the marriage-bond affects the position of the woman more vitally than that of the man. Her stake, so to speak, in the venture is far greater than that of the husband. The fixity and finality of her position protects her against "the vacillations of man's changing fancy, the caprices of his lawless appetite."¹ Insecurity of tenure is an evil and a danger in any situation of life: most of all in a relationship on the proper maintenance of which depends the stability of society itself. The reason why marriage is so often a failure is that men and women bind themselves together in this wonderful relationship lightly and inconsiderately: mere accident, a passing whim, a transient similarity of tastes, weariness of a single life—these are often the motives which determine an irrevocable choice. Sacred obligations are incurred for the sake of a competence, or to gratify social ambition, and who

¹ W. S. Lilly, *On Right and Wrong*, ch. ix. (London, 1890.)

can wonder that the result is disastrous? What men need to learn is that they must look at marriage *sub specie æternitatis*, undertaking its responsibilities not lightly, but "advisedly, soberly, discreetly, and in the fear of God."

And this leads to a second consideration. Marriage is a vocation, and those who embrace it must be prepared to submit to a Divine discipline and education in character. Divorce is too often frivolously sought as a means of escaping the moral training involved in marriage; the root of our present evils is, in fact, the general impatience of discipline which marks our restless age. To Christ and His apostles the family is "not a temporary arrangement at the mercy of uncontrolled temper or shifting desire; it is ordained for that very discipline in forbearance and self-restraint which is precisely what many persons would avoid, and the easy rupture of its union blights these virtues in their bud."¹ As a Divine vocation, marriage has a spiritual aim and purpose, namely, the perfecting of character. The married are *fellow-heirs of the grace of life*² through mutual devotion and self-sacrifice, through common experiences of good and ill, sorrow and joy, the personality of each is being

¹ Peabody, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

² 1 Pet. iii. 7.

enriched and completed. If indeed we consider for a moment to what heights of beauty and grace human character has often been lifted by an ideal marriage, we can only echo the passionate words of George Eliot in *Adam Bede* :—

“What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life—to strengthen each other in all labour, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting ?”

But the family, we must remind ourselves, is not fulfilling its rightful function if it is a mere “stronghold of individualism,” if it involves a mere *égoïsme à plusieurs*. Marriage should be a school of brotherly love in its widest sense ; it should develop largeness of heart, quickness of sympathy, wide social affections. “The closer and warmer the home affection,” says Canon Scott Holland, “the larger and stronger should become those social instincts which make life inconceivable except in a community, and which constitute it a matter of sheer habit and of unmitigated joy to think always of others as well as one’s self, to associate others with every word and work, to devote to the common welfare the richest energies with which

man is endowed. Nowhere but in the home can these gifts be developed . . . and if they stop short at the domestic limits, and refuse to open out to their wider office, they sin against the home as much as against the State.”¹ Home life, the *consortium omnis vitæ* in which marriage consists, fails of its true end if it does not educate, and fortify the spirit of social service, if it does not awaken sympathy, if it does not deepen insight into the social needs of the time :

The world waits
For help. Beloved, let us love so well
Our work shall still be better for our love,
And still our love be sweeter for our work,
And both commended, for the sake of each,
By all true workers and true lovers born.²

We may conclude with the remark that the evils which flow from careless, profane, and worldly marriages are designed to recall us to first principles. From one point of view it is certainly a “hard thing” that one mistake should involve a man or woman in a burden of permanent wretchedness ; but we sometimes forget that mere “happiness” is not the only or chief aim of marriage, and that it exists not for individuals, but for the fulfil-

¹ *Lombard Street in Lent*, p. 134.

² E. B. Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, bk. ix.

ment of a Divine purpose respecting mankind at large. For men impatiently to extricate themselves from troubles which their own folly and want of consideration have brought upon them, is to evade a discipline which, if meekly accepted, would be found fruitful in personal and social blessing.

VII.

HOME LIFE.

Human, vital, fructuous rose,
Whose calyx holds the multitude of leaves,
Loves filial, loves fraternal, neighbour-loves,
And civic . . . all fair petals, all good scents,
All reddened, sweetened from one central Heart !

E. B. BROWNING.

WE have already considered what is meant by the Service of Man. The duty of active ministry to others—of maintaining and fulfilling the claims of social brotherhood—is one that is being widely recognised nowadays, and that does not seem likely to be forgotten. But “charity begins at home,” and the peculiar sacredness of home life consists in the fact that to the vast majority of Christians “home” is the appointed sphere of moral discipline and probation. It is in the home that character is generally trained and ripened for the wider “service of man” that lies beyond it. By a round of

common duties and mutual services, men and women are being educated for the larger ministries of Churchmanship and citizenship, and for communion and fellow-service hereafter *with the saints in light*.¹

When we speak of "Home," we touch upon a thing that specially appeals to Teutonic sentiment. "The life of home has become the great possession, the great delight, the great social achievement of our race ; its refuge from the storms and darkness without, an ample compensation to us for so much that we want of the social brilliancy and enjoyment of our Latin brethren. Reverence for the household and for household life, a high sense of its duties, a keen relish for its pleasures, this has been a strength to German society amid much to unsettle it. The absence of this taste for the quiet and unexcited life of home is a formidable symptom in portions of our race across the Atlantic. And when home life, with its sanctities, its simplicity, its calm and deep joys and sorrows, ceases to have its charm for us in England, the greatest break-up and catastrophe in English history will not be far off."²

The anxious question therefore arises, how far

¹ Col i. 12.

² Dean Church, *Gifts of Civilization*, p. 337.

the dangers to which home life is at present exposed are being overcome or counteracted. That these dangers are real and pressing a glance at certain symptoms of modern social life is sufficient to show. I do not now propose to enter into the deep-seated industrial causes which are tending to undermine or break up family life. It is obvious enough that to great multitudes of the toiling poor in our large cities, anything like "home life" in its true sense is prohibited by the conditions in which they live. Professor Peabody truly observes that : "It is but a small minority of the population of a great city which is able to maintain privacy of domestic arrangement and to train those sentiments and traditions which gather about a home."¹ Indeed, much of the social work of the Christian Church aims directly at providing some sort of "shelter" for the houseless waifs and strays of our cities ; and boys, young men, girls, and women are invited to join "clubs" or "institutes," that at least they may have some place of resort after working hours for recreation, rest, and social fellowship. The problem of the city is, in great measure, the problem of the family. But a more formidable danger that threatens the existence of home life is

¹ *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 165.

a temper of selfish individualism, which has produced in all classes of society a tendency to prefer the comparative ease and freedom of a celibate life to the duties and responsibilities involved in marriage. We have lately heard much of the "Workmen's hotel movement" in England—a movement which was designed to grapple with the problem of providing decent and inexpensive accommodation for single men of the artisan class. Married men were not, however, excluded, and the result has been that the number of *married men* who prefer life in these hotels to home life has steadily increased. It is even stated that if the present proportion of married occupants is maintained, out of (say) 2400 men living in such hotels, no less than 400 will probably be married artisans living apart from their families; in other words, there will be "four hundred homes which lack the central feature of home." These facts mean that a movement, initiated with the best and most philanthropic intentions, is actually found to act as a disintegrating force, making for the break-up of home life. And in any case, the question might fairly be asked how far it is wise to offer indiscriminate encouragement to the life of celibacy among large classes of working people. But it is

not in the artisan class alone that disquieting symptoms of a reaction against family life are already apparent. In his recent book, *Anticipations*, the well-known writer, Mr. H. G. Wells, expresses the opinion that celibacy, both among men and women, is becoming increasingly common, and that among the married there is a tendency to shirk the obligations of the married state. "The world of Georgian England," he says, "was a world of homes. The world of the coming time will still have its homes, its real mothers and its cared-for children, the inheritors of the future ; but in addition to this home-world, frothing tumultuously over and amidst these stable rocks, there will be an enormous complex of establishments and hotels and sterile households and flats, and all the elaborate furnishing and appliances of a luxurious extinction."¹

There are, then, causes at work which threaten the stability, and even the existence, of home life. On this point something was said in the paper on Christian Marriage. It is, however, only right to point out that there is a counter-movement at work from which much may be hoped. The battle with the slum is a distinct contribution to the

¹ *Anticipations*, p. 133.

family problem; the housing of the poor is attracting renewed attention, and the centrifugal tendency observable in modern cities—the multiplication of suburban homes—is a very encouraging sign.¹ But nevertheless it remains true that the institution of home is threatened by unspiritual, that is, by anti-Christian, ideas of happiness, of liberty, of success. Family life was not divinely intended to make life easier, but better. It involves a discipline in self-sacrifice and self-restraint which many are anxious to evade; it rests upon instincts which must be pure and self-forgetful if love is to have its *perfect work*. And accordingly we have need to study afresh those principles of the Gospel which regulate home life, and make it the chief factor in the development of man's perfection as a social being.

Now it is characteristic of the supreme truth and wisdom of the Gospel that instead of multiplying directions in regard to the Christian's conduct in other and larger spheres of duty, it confines itself on the whole to laying down minutely and emphatically the principles which secure holiness, peace, and the spirit of service in the home.

In the Epistle to the Colossians, for example,

¹ Cp. Peabody, *ubi sup.*

St. Paul gives a summary of the simple but far-reaching rules that should guide and consecrate the sacred ministries of home. Husbands, wives, children, and servants are addressed in turn. Each member of the typical household is enjoined to bear in mind his or her own duties and the rightful claims of others, and thus there emerge the great principles that give to home life its sweetness and dignity. There must be before all else the *fear of God*, in which Christian life, with all its manifold relationships, is rooted and grounded: the fear of God regulating the desire for wedded life and determining the choice of a partner (cp. 1 Cor. vii. 39); inspiring the nurture of children and lending the highest sanction to their obedience; controlling the necessary tasks of the household and imparting honour even to the fulfilment of menial duties. All is to be planned and fulfilled *in the Lord*, in union with His mind and under the leading of His Spirit; mutual duties are to be discharged *as unto the Lord*, in the consciousness of His presence. And next come the other necessary conditions of an ideal home life. With the husband resides the element of *authority*, and therefore the wife is enjoined to recognise loyally the natural leadership of the

man, and to accept it with cheerful submission. Next there is the binding force of *affection*. Love is the duty commended to the husband. Men are to love their wives with reverent, tender regard, and not to let the rightful exercise of authority become a *root of bitterness* or irritation. On the children is impressed the duty of *obedience*. Nothing is said to them of the "rights of personality," or of possible pretexts for setting aside the authority of the parent. On the other hand, parents are warned not to provoke resistance to their rule by harshness or unwisdom in its exercise ; not to discourage their children by expecting too much, nor to repress by undue reserve and coldness their natural confidence. Finally, servants are exhorted to show *fidelity*, and if nothing is said to them of their "rights" and "liberties," of the "wrongs" of servitude or the "indignity" of a dependent position, the master, on the other hand, is urged to keep alive in himself the sense of responsibility toward those who are his equals in the sight of the Master in heaven.¹

Conversely, we may notice that the absence of these Christian graces is that which surely tends to make homes miserable. There are many homes

¹ Col. iii, 18-iv. 2. Cp. Bp. Moule's *Colossian Studies*, ch. xi.

nowadays which are in a true sense godless ; where family worship is unknown, where Sunday is a day profaned by sloth and dissipation, where parents ignore the debt they owe to their children—withholding from them both religious instruction and salutary discipline. There are homes in which the parent either lacks authority or misuses it ; where the young grow up without guidance, without leadership, without sympathy. It has been recently complained that “a noteworthy defect in the care of children is the lack of supervision of their intellectual food. Mothers who tend as with vestal care the flame of physical life not only betray indifference to what goes into a child’s mind, but actually permit to be provided for its consumption vapid, vulgar, and even vicious reading.”¹ Whether from shyness or from indifference, parents are content to leave the education of their children to others, and think that school discipline will do the work of home influence. The worst faults are overlooked if they do not interfere with the convenience or ease of the parent, while slight offences are often visited with harsh vindictiveness. Of homes darkened by lovelessness, discord, and insubordination, what need to speak? Of the

¹ *The Century* for December, 1901, p. 315.

discomfort that arises from the modern contempt for domestic service—a very real factor in the decay of family life—many readers of this paper will have had bitter experience.

Thank God, there still are countless homes in which the teaching of Jesus has borne its fair and noble fruit. One such is described to us in the *Life of Phillips Brooks*, whose career proves, if proof were needed, that parents who give themselves up to the sacred work of making home the leading influence in the lives of their children have their reward. "The home became to the children their choicest treasure, to which they fondly reverted in after years, when its diviner meaning was more apparent." "At heart he [Phillips Brooks] always remained a child in the household until father and mother were withdrawn from the world. The vision of that dear, unworldly, self-sacrificing life was always before him, . . . nearer to him than any other experience." "Phillips Brooks knew the facts of life, seeing with his father's eyes, and all the hopes and possibilities of life through the eyes of his mother."

Glad sight wherever new with old
Is joined through some dear home-born tie ;
The life of all that we behold
Depends upon that mystery.

VIII.

THE USE OF MONEY.

Be thrifty, but not covetous : therefore give
Thy need, thine honour, and thy friend his due.
Never was scraper brave man. Get to live ;
Then live and use it : else it is not true
That thou hast gotten. Surely use alone
Makes money not a contemptible stone.

G. HERBERT.

I TAKE it for granted that most of those who read these pages are anxious, not so much to learn, as to be reminded of the claims of their Christian profession. I assume that they aim at making their religion a practical power ; that they wish to fill every detail of life with moral purpose, and to leave no department of conduct uncontrolled by the Spirit of Christ. All, I take it, will agree that "whatever we are, whatever we possess, must be used for the true development of life in ourselves and in others, of the life earthly and temporal as the preparation for the life heavenly

and the life eternal, which is even now.”¹ With regard to money, the subject now to be considered, I am not concerned with the principles that should control its *acquisition*. The problem to be discussed is that of administration or *use*. How may we practically apply the principle that wealth is a trust to be employed for worthy purposes, and that no use of it can be morally indifferent, can fail to affect beneficially or injuriously ourselves and others?

Money is in a sense *power*; but some one has said, with even greater truth, that money is *character*. There are of course circumstances under which the absolute renunciation of wealth may be not only an act of heroism, but a duty. Although, however, money furnishes an opportunity for sacrifice, it is not always that such sacrifice is more fruitful for good than conscientious use. Again, if the possession of wealth is attended by inevitable temptations, it also offers manifold facilities for service; and character grows by resistance to temptation and by the habit of *buying up the opportunity*² as it comes. “I think I could be a good woman if I had five thousand

¹ Bishop Westcott, *Lessons from Work*, p. 341.

² Eph. v. 16.

a year," says Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair*, and even in the cynicism there is a grain of truth, namely, that in proportion as moral opportunities are greater, conscience may win nobler victories, and character attain to loftier heights. St. Paul is justified by his experience of the world in saying that *The love of money is the root of all evil*; but the wise king of Israel was not mistaken when he saw in his riches a special token of the Divine favour,¹ nor Aristotle when he assigned a high place to the virtue of "magnificence."²

Perhaps the simplest plan of dealing with our subject is to consider the threefold relationship in which man stands: to himself, to his neighbour, and to God. These several relationships involve particular duties and problems. There are claims connected with personal expenditure, social service, and duty toward God. Each of these must be briefly discussed.

(1) As to personal expenditure, which includes maintenance, clothing, the care of health, the culture of the mind, etc., it is obvious that here especially Christian principles find scope for "continuous daily application." In the personal use of wealth we need to observe the law of

¹ 1 Kings iii. 13.

² *Eth. Nic.*, iv. 2.

sobriety or temperance. We have to ask ourselves what we are aiming at in life, how we may be most efficiently equipped for our work, and what is most profitable for our character. How far does our expenditure help us to do our duty better, or make us more serviceable to our fellows? And at this point we are reminded by economists that the "living wage" of an individual varies with the nature of his work, and the kind of claims to which he is subject. Thus Professor Marshall points out that certain conventional necessities are required for personal efficiency, and that the necessities, strictly so-called, of the professional man—the brain worker—the skilled labourer, are more numerous than those of the field labourer or the unskilled artisan. And yet we are told by the same authority that "more than half of the consumption of the upper classes of society in England is wholly unnecessary."¹ We have, then, to aim at simplicity and efficiency. "We must seek to live on as little as will support the full vigour of our life and work."² We must try to become, like St. Paul, men of few wants (Phil. iv. 12), and in matters of diet and dress

¹ *Principles of Economics*, vol. i. p. 124.

² Bishop Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

to content ourselves with what is plain, good, and consistent, not with a tyrannous and capricious fashion, but with the claims of our position and station. Discretion and self-restraint in these minor things will leave us ampler means for obtaining those "luxuries" which minister to the joy and grace of life, and so promote its power to enrich, uplift, and bless others. The sense of beauty, the thirst for knowledge, the power of delight in nature and in the glorious gifts of art, were not given us by God to be starved or wasted. The Christian is free to avail himself of those recreations which, wisely enjoyed, tend to elevate his own nature, offer him new powers of usefulness, and speak to him continually of the glory and love of God. The pursuit of private pleasure or self-development may of course become a snare; it may degenerate into self-indulgence; but there is such a thing as using the world without abusing it; and He *who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*,¹ would have us receive His gifts in the spirit of thanksgiving. But we must be on our guard against self-deception, and bear in mind the continuous demand that life makes upon us for self-mastery and definiteness

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 17.

of moral purpose, for the education of desire and the discipline of character.

We must not, however, leave the subject of personal expenditure without recalling for a moment the fact of our responsibility as consumers. On this point Bishop Westcott speaks with great clearness in an address which has been already quoted. He points out how much consumers may do to raise the whole status of labour by "sedulously educating themselves to desire good things, to know good things, and to look beyond every article to the labour of all those who have helped to bring it to us."¹ The passion for cheapness must not blind us to the conditions under which the articles we buy have been produced. If goods are produced under bad conditions, involving the degradation or semi-starvation of the workers, it is our duty to check the demand for them, at least so far as our personal influence extends. "The producing man," says Professor Smart, "is essentially the servant of the consuming man. . . . The industrial world is our servant, and, like any good servant, is only forestalling our wishes."² Thus the production of

¹ Bishop Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

² *Studies in Economics*, pp. 265 foll.

articles made with leadless glaze mainly depends, we are told, "on the growth of a larger and persistent demand for it on the part of the general public." What is called "preferential dealing" is a method which aims at improving the conditions under which certain industries are carried on, and at raising the standard of demand; insisting, that is, that the articles purchased by consumers shall be good in quality and made under good conditions.

(2) But we must pass on to our next point: the use of money for purposes of social service. A man owes to the community at large the right use of that which he holds, strictly speaking, as a trustee. The law of Christian stewardship can imply nothing less. Each must decide for himself the precise direction in which he may best render service to his fellows. The housing of the poor; the promotion of education or temperance; the providing of recreation or open spaces for the toiling and overcrowded masses; the care of the aged poor; the founding of libraries and social institutes; the building of labour homes and refuges; the formation of companies to promote co-operative enterprise; these are some of the fields in which a liberal expenditure of capital would reap a rich harvest.

It has been justly pointed out that when wealth consisted for the most part in land, the owners as a rule fulfilled the obligations imposed on them by their position. But nowadays the sources of wealth are less obvious and certain, and hence much of it is "irresponsible;" it neither fulfils nor recognises the duty it owes to the producers of wealth and to society at large. People forget that a man's true freedom consists in the power to do not what he *likes*, but what he *ought*, with his own; and the main root of the social evils which are so formidable in modern states is the fact foretold by St. Paul, who warns us that *perilous times—hard times*—shall come when men are *lovers of their own selves—lovers of money*.¹ And the real remedy is pointed out by Frederick Robertson: "When the people of this country, especially the rich, shall have been touched with the spirit of the Cross to a largeness of sacrifice of which they have not dreamed as yet, there will be an atonement between the rights of labour and the rights of property."² As we have seen in another connection, almsgiving in the widest sense is an integral element of Christian practice. It is a means by which man imitates the large, impartial,

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2.

² *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 261.

and infinitely wise bounty of the Author and Giver of all good.

(3) And this brings us naturally to our third point: the claim of God, and of His Kingdom, upon wealth. It was the sin of the rich fool that he was *not rich toward God*.¹ It is of course true that in serving society, we are rendering to God His due. In the conscientious administration of our business, we are recognising our stewardship and our accountability to Him. Nevertheless, there are claims of religion to be satisfied: there are religious as distinguished from social enterprises. We need only mention the great and crying needs of the home and foreign mission-field, the terrible spiritual destitution, the *famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord*.² Undoubtedly every Christian ought to take some share in the work of his Church: he ought to do what lies within his reach to extend to others the spiritual privileges which he enjoys. The fulfilment of this duty will depend to a certain extent on circumstances. A conscientious man will devote to religious purposes more or less, according to the fluctuations of his income and the

¹ St. Luke xii. 21.

² Amos viii. 11.

number of primary claims upon it (*e.g.* the maintenance and education of his children and the duty of making adequate provision for their future).¹ But at least a certain proportion of his income (the ancient Jew was required to give a tenth) should be dedicated to the service of God, whether that service takes the form of aiding religious work or of ministering to the various forms of poverty and social distress which appeal to the charity of the rich. It is the great danger of an age of widespread wealth and luxury that it loses the sense of spiritual realities. St. Paul bids the wealthy counteract this materialistic habit of mind by putting their trust not in the dead idol of riches, but in *the living God*—in Him who is ever working in the world on behalf of His own good purpose, and is ever bringing nearer the consummation of His Kingdom.²

Hitherto we have spoken of those uses of money which are ideally right, but we must not conclude without some reference to that which is unhappily much more common—the shameful misuse of

¹ The duty of saving money, in order to make reasonable provision for future contingencies of this kind, is distinctly implied in such passages as 1 Tim. v. 8 and 2 Cor. xii. 14.

² 1 Tim. vi. 17. Cp. *Lombard Street in Lent*, p. 57.

money for purely selfish purposes. In England we have not long since been startled by a colossal fraud—the embezzlement of an enormous sum by a bank clerk—the motive of which appears to have been the necessity of paying off debts incurred through reckless betting transactions. Of the dreadful havoc which the gambling spirit is working in countless homes, of the moral and spiritual ruin which it often involves—this crime is only one glaring instance. There is scarcely a hamlet in our country but shows traces of its blighting influence, and the best service which a patriotic Christian can render to his fellow-countrymen in these days is to try to bring home to them the essential evils of the gambling spirit. This may be best done by insisting on two clear and unquestionable principles :

First, it is morally wrong to take another man's money without giving him any adequate return. "Gambling is of the very essence of selfishness. No man can gain a penny by gambling except at the expense of some one else. The gambler's consuming desire to win is, on its other side, a consuming desire that his neighbour may lose. No one who lives by gambling can honestly say the Lord's Prayer. He cannot say 'Give us this

day our daily bread,' for his constant desire is, 'Give me this day my brother's bread.'"¹

Secondly, a man is accountable to Almighty God for the use of his money, as of everything else which he possesses. To employ it for purposes of reckless selfishness or for the gratification of a mere thirst for excitement, is to rob God of His due, and to defraud society, which may rightly require a social, and not an anti-social, employment of wealth.

The spirit of gambling finds many outlets. The workman who tries to get the maximum wage for the minimum of work, the lender who requires an excessive rate of interest, the stock-broker who secretly attempts to give a fictitious value to the shares which he is buying for a client—these are not less gamblers than the poor dupe who puts his money on a horse of which he knows nothing beyond what he reads in the columns of a sporting newspaper, or the man who hazards his earnings on the result of a game of chance. Those who have the best opportunities of judging, assure us that of all vices, gambling is the most soul-destroying; it debases the whole character of a

¹ Bishop Moorhouse, *Primary Charge to the Diocese of Manchester*, p. 12.

man, it perverts his conception of life, it brings him to the worst of all possible evils—the recklessness of a hard heart which neither fears God nor regards man.

The only remedy for the gambling spirit is to convince men how clean contrary it is to the spirit of Christ's Gospel ; how it ignores the very law by which society is held together. *Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others.*¹ Legislation, it is to be feared, can do little, though that little is worth attempting. It might be possible to restrict the license of the press, which by publishing betting news, fosters the evil. But the real hope lies in bringing Christian principles to bear on public opinion, and so converting the uneasy feeling that "something ought to be done," into a fixed determination to discountenance every kind of gambling as a hideous form of selfishness, and ultimately to stamp it out.

Money is ours, not to spoil or vulgarise us, still less to injure or degrade our fellow-men. It is given us as an instrument of Christian freedom, as a help toward a noble and beneficent life. Yes ; in this sense money is *power*, money is *character*.

¹ Phil. ii. 4.

IX.

THE CHRISTIAN IN BUSINESS.

There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of th' everlasting chime ;
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

J. KEEBLE.

IT has been often noticed that our Lord in His teaching speaks with something like sympathetic interest of the business world, and finds in it lessons and illustrations bearing upon the work and progress of His Kingdom. He has His eye on the shepherd, the sower, and the fisherman ; He points to the example of the merchant, the householder, the employer of agricultural labour ; He commends as types of character the faithful steward, the diligent servant, the watchful porter. We may also remember the parable of the Talents,

and the saying ascribed to Christ by an early tradition, *Shew yourselves tried bankers*. The Gospel found both opponents and adherents among the trading class. If Demetrius the silversmith and Alexander the coppersmith were enemies of St. Paul, Lydia the seller of purple and Aquila the tent-maker were included among his converts and friends.

Wherein, then, lies the peculiar peril of the business world? Why is it that so many experienced men declare that the conduct of business on Christian principles is not only difficult, but impossible? It is manifest that in itself business is a great department of social service, and that it offers to those engaged in it a rare training in character. The secret of success in business is not necessarily systematic deceit and superior "smartness"; for no business can thrive when public confidence has once been permanently shaken. On the whole, character is the chief social force; and success will depend in the long run on the extent to which habits of honesty, fidelity, sobriety, punctuality, and good-will prevail among the *employés* in stores, marts, dockyards, and factories. Speaking for myself, I feel sincerely grateful to Professor Peabody for deprecating a

pessimistic view of business life.¹ He admits that it is "often harsh and even merciless in its methods ; but," he says, "it makes much of such qualities as truth, honour, fidelity, and loyalty. In fact, when one looks below the surface of business life, it is most impressive to observe that its very existence and continuance depend on certain moral assumptions, and that it trains men in some ethical qualities which do not seem to be developed in the same degree anywhere else." We are not concerned in this paper with those exceptional men whose foresight, resolution, and statesmanlike capacity make them veritable captains and kings of industry. They also occasionally manifest qualities which the pioneers of Christ's kingdom might do well to imitate ; but here I shall speak only of ordinary Christian men engaged in ordinary business.

What, then, we may ask, are the peculiar dangers and temptations to which a Christian is exposed in the conduct of his business? (1) First, there is the danger arising from the sheer pressure of business. That to which a man devotes all his best energies will gradually absorb all his thought. "Getting and spending we lay

¹ In his book, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, chap. vi.

waste our powers." If men are wholly absorbed in the task of acquisition, their higher faculties—their more refined tastes and feelings—must inevitably languish and decay. We all remember how Charles Darwin complains that a certain "atrophy" of his æsthetic faculties resulted from his exclusive devotion to science. The effect of continuous business cannot but be deadening and demoralising. Some twenty years ago patriotic Americans were warned by Andrew D. White that "the mercantile spirit" was threatening something higher than the material prosperity of their country; already the spheres of art, literature, education, and religion were suffering from its effects. Indeed, "the greatest work," he said, "which the coming century has to do is to build up an aristocracy of thought and feeling which shall hold its own against the aristocracy of mercantilism."¹

Now, the first aim of a Christian business man will be to secure time for the development of his own higher nature; those words of Christ, *a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth*, will ring in his ears; he will make

¹ Address on "The Message of the Nineteenth Century to the Twentieth," delivered at Yale College in June, 1883 (quoted by T. E. Brown, *Studies in Modern Socialism*, chap. xi.).

time not only for literature, art, music, and travel, but still more carefully for prayer, for Bible-reading, for communion with God. He will take special care to use his Sundays as opportunities for the refreshment, not merely of his tired body, but of his depressed and jaded spirit. What has already been said about the true use of Sunday applies with exceptional force to business men. The more "despiritualising" a man's week-day work is, the more urgently does he need to use his day of rest aright, seeking all his *fresh springs* in God, and gathering not only bodily but spiritual strength for the tasks and trials of the week.

(2) The difficulty of using the life of business itself as an occasion for serving God and for advancing in strength and grace of character, is perhaps not so serious as we might think. Everything depends on a man's point of view. If he looks on the world as God's world, and on his own personal work as God's work, he already possesses the necessary motive for leading an upright and beneficent life as a business man. Remembering always that the end of life is not gain but character, he will feel that his work is in a real sense the service of God; he will be diligent, careful,

conscientious, considerate toward those whom he employs, and concerned for their highest welfare; above all, he will remember that the possession of wealth is a call to honest stewardship. Here is a description of a Christian merchant who rose to eminence in Liverpool not many years ago:—

“He recognised the principle that in going into business God has the first claim on the profits. When he had acquired a certain amount of capital which he considered adequate to his business obligations, some years before his death, he came to the conclusion to allow no further accumulation, but to spend all that he got, as God prospered him, for the promotion of Christian enterprise and social reforms. . . . He ventured always to carry his Christian faith and his Christian principles into the transactions of his everyday business.”¹

Here at least was a man, and the late Mr. W. H. Smith was another, who resolutely made his business an opportunity for serving God heartily and for doing good to his fellow-men.

(3) I have only space for a few words on the serious question of dishonest and fraudulent practices in trade: adulteration of goods, false state-

¹ R. F. Horton, *This Do*, pp. 7 foll. The reference is to the life of Mr. Alexander Balfour, of Liverpool.

ments as to the quality of wares offered for sale, the tricks, devices, and audacious ventures prompted by self-interest or by the pressure of competition. I do not see how a sincere Christian can tolerate dishonesty or untruthfulness in his own dealings. More than this, if he looks upon his work as a form of social service, he will place himself in the position of the persons with whom he is transacting business, whether as buyer or seller. He will take no unfair advantage ; he will not try to "drive a bargain" in the sense of over-reaching another ; the fair business at which he will aim is that which confers *mutual benefits*. This, surely, is the least that is involved in the rule, "Do to others as you would be done by." Of the merchant mentioned above we are told that in his case the difficulty was "not to get him to treat others as he treated himself, but to get him to treat himself as he treated others."

That fidelity to the mind and spirit of Christ will sometimes involve, in business as in other departments of work, suffering, loss, and perhaps persecution, cannot be denied : but at least men may aim high. Let them look upon their business as a way of serving their fellow-men, as a way of labouring together with God. Let them regard it

as an opportunity, not without its perils and temptations, for showing loyalty to Jesus Christ, for growing like Him, and (if need be) for suffering with Him and sharing His reproach.

X.

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite ;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

A. TENNYSON.

THE recent extension in England of the principle of local government has been a movement full of promise ; it has encouraged the revival of the spirit of citizenship. It has reduced a hopelessly immense task to manageable proportions ; it has awakened a new interest in the solution of problems which have hitherto been the despair of civic reformers. There is some justice in the charge that a great proportion of the misery of London has been the inevitable result of leaving a city of more than 5,000,000 inhabitants practically ungoverned, without efficient administration

or serviceable organisation. There is now a fair prospect of substantial improvement, a real ground for hope that individual efforts will not be altogether wasted ; and Christians who are interested in social reform welcome the opportunity of asserting the great principle of their creed that the claim of Jesus Christ extends to the whole of human life ; that all modifications in social conditions or arrangements are amenable to His law, and ought to be judged by His mind. Indeed, the word "secular" is not strictly applicable to the functions of civic government, for all social changes either hinder or minister to the growth of Christ's kingdom ; all either manifest or obscure Christ's righteousness. The miseries of great cities have led men to deny the existence of God, while just and vigorous government has been welcomed as an earthly shadow of His heavenly rule. The kingdom of God manifests its power in the wise and beneficent action of the State or City, which in relation to the poor, the oppressed, the unprivileged, should have as its motto the great words of the *Te Deum*, "Govern them : and lift them up for ever."

But we must remind ourselves at this point that the well-being of the State or City depends

upon the unselfishness, the public spirit, the righteous zeal of individuals. Christians, as members of a body, are called upon to carry their principles beyond the narrow range of their own families and household, and to bring them to bear on the larger and more difficult problems of civic duty. Long habit in some cases, political or social pessimism in others, has made men indifferent to the welfare of the community in which they live, and blind to their share in its corporate responsibilities. We Englishmen have lately been reminded that in this matter America has set us a noble example. Mr. Gladstone is said to have once expressed the opinion that "the Americans were conspicuous for combining enthusiasm for their country with love for their city." Londoners are fond and proud of London; but they certainly do not feel the enthusiasm for their city which, as a rule, distinguishes a citizen of Boston, New York, or Philadelphia. The very size of London makes even earnest people despondent; they are apathetic because they feel that individually they are helpless; and the consequence is that there has been hitherto no strong public opinion to guide or check municipal action; public bodies have acted without any strong sense

of duty or feeling of corporate responsibility. Of personal interest, personal inquiry, personal work, there has as yet been too little. We have forgotten that civic duty is a true part of religion ; civic service is in a real sense religious service.

Experience has gradually brought home this truth to the conscience of Englishmen and Americans. An improvement of the social condition of the masses in our crowded cities can only be brought about by the efforts of religious people, that is, of people in whom a Christian conscience is aroused, and who are willing to bear burdens on behalf of the helpless and toiling classes. This is admitted on all hands ; it is recognised even by those who were at one time inclined to believe that economic laws, if left to themselves, would bring about a social millennium. It is acknowledged now that the moral welfare of the people depends on the exertions of good men—"men of good will"—who know what they want, and are not afraid to bear their due share of civic and national responsibility.

What, then, should a Christian city aim at securing for its citizens? All the essentials, surely, of healthy life : fresh air, pure water, sufficient light, open spaces for recreation, decent

dwellings. It should aim at regulating and bringing under control the appalling evils of the drink traffic; it should seek to banish, in a word, the social evils which are sometimes supposed to be the "necessary accompaniments of organised city life;" the vices of the gin palace, the streets, the crowded slum. What London chiefly needs, most Englishmen know. In a city where 800,000 people are living under conditions of overcrowding, and have thus lost the essentials of home life, the chief civic problem is clear and urgent. Of American cities I prefer to say nothing beyond what is publicly or officially admitted by experts. The citizens of New York, I read, demand "that the government of the city shall not be employed to protect a trade in vice, which is carried on for the benefit of a political organisation." "All the conditions which surround childhood, youth, and womanhood in New York's crowded tenement quarter make for unrighteousness." Such is the dispassionate language of an official report. Can there be any question that Christian citizenship has a vital part to play in the moral progress of the Anglo-Saxon race? Is it not a plain matter of fact that if national life is not to be poisoned at its source, "all alike," as Bishop Potter has recently

said, "must bear a hand here and arise and strive for God and our city's honour" ?

State legislation can do much : it embodies the judgments of the popular conscience, it can to some extent hinder the growth and spread of acknowledged evils, but without the support of public opinion, or rather of a public conscience, it hangs fire, it is like a machine without steam. In England, Parliament always shrinks from measures of compulsion ; it enforces nothing ; it is content with permitting individual citizens to combine and put the law in action. This circumstance has notoriously hindered the attainment of much practical result from our housing legislation. What we require is not fresh legislation, for the welfare of our cities is now mainly dependent on the action of municipalities, county councils, and other public bodies. The one thing needful is the awakening of conscience in individual citizens, and above all, *willingness to take trouble*. In our municipal elections comparatively few even care to record a vote ; in a School Board election the handful of voters who go to the polls are mainly interested in the issue of some petty denominational struggle ; in some of our villages the annual "parish meeting" is attended by the parson and a

single farmer ; many able men decline to face the trouble of serving on a vestry or board of guardians, and prefer to discharge their social obligations by deputy. Something of the same kind is, I suppose, observable in America. The claims of personal business, the pursuit of pleasure, the refined egoism of domestic life—these too often shut out the sense of civic responsibilities.

A Christian, alive to the claims of civic brotherhood, has no excuse for such apathy. He knows that in promoting the physical welfare of his fellow-citizens he is really providing for their moral interests ; in working for the purification of city life and for the right solution of such problems as those of Housing, the Drink Traffic, the Purification of the Streets, the Demolition of the Slums, he is fulfilling the law of Christ ; in cheerfully bearing his share of the heavy financial burden involved in all drastic reforms, he is rising to the demands of a Christian conscience and doing his utmost to aid his weaker brethren. He is acting on the conviction that the moral welfare of any community "depends," as Bishop Gore has said, "on the righteous being also public-spirited."¹

And this suggests the further remark that, under

¹ See *The Church and New Century Problems*, p. 71.

the conditions of life in a great city, a Christian is bound to consider the effect of his personal example in raising or lowering the average level of social morality. Take, for instance, the question of theatre-going. Probably there never was a time when the theatre might exercise a wider educational power than at the present day. And yet it is notorious that there has been of late years a marked deterioration in the type of drama commonly performed at many, if not most, of our theatres. The functions of the censor of plays need to be exercised in earnest. At any rate, some of our modern dramatists are apparently content to pander to the looser and baser tastes of "society"; the result being that plays of immoral tendency are not merely tolerated by a lax public opinion, but patronised and encouraged by persons of the highest social standing; even fashionable mothers nowadays initiate their daughters into the mysteries of "real life" by taking them to see plays which depict what is most sordid, base, and depraved in human life—plays most perilous to purity of feeling, to simplicity of character, to refinement of taste.

It is a painful and serious fact that no effective protest against this great and growing evil has

yet made itself heard. Much to his honour, Mr. Samuel Smith some time ago drew the attention of the House of Commons to the subject, but unfortunately without result. Yet a moment's consideration will show us how much is at stake in this matter—what ugly possibilities are involved in the debasement of the drama. Millions are being spent on elementary education; a great effort is being made at this very hour to secure for the rising generation a more effective training for the work of life—a training in which it is hoped that religion will be a vital element, strengthening and purifying character, and counteracting the spirit of materialism which is so apt to deaden moral effort, and to choke moral aspiration. Yet theatre-goers in society are setting the example—only too readily followed in our music halls and places of popular entertainment—of patronising performances of which it is not too strong to say that they encourage immorality, and hold up for imitation what is meanest and unworthiest in the social life of our time. In this matter Christians have a real opportunity of exercising a wholesome influence. Let them resist the slackness which will not take trouble to distinguish between the precious and the vile in dramatic art.

Let them steadily discountenance, let them boldly denounce, as they find opportunity, any plays which either represent what is indecent and base, or ridicule things sacred and venerable.¹ Let them bear in mind that for a Christian citizen, not less important than the duty of supporting churches and schools, is the obligation to stem by personal effort and example the tide of moral reaction which from time to time threatens the well-being of even the greatest nations. The question "How am I to exercise my influence?" is one which each Christian must answer for himself. The vital thing is to remember that the service of man is also the service of God. "When it is realised that it is God's service to serve the city, then the citizens will know what to do, and reforms will follow past present imagination."²

¹ As an illustration of what may be done the following paragraph from a recent number of the *Daily Chronicle* is noteworthy.

NEW YORK, October 30.

The Actors' Church Alliance, of which Bishop Potter is the president, has appointed a committee, which includes several leading clergymen of New York, to visit all the New York theatres and report whether the plays "are fit for religious men and women to see and for children to know about." Information as to the plays will then be sent to the clergy throughout the country, who, acting through the influential members of their congregations, will make an effort to induce people to stay away from all plays visiting their towns that have been adversely reported upon.

² The Rev. S. A. Barnett, *The Service of God*, p. 36.

XI.

THE CHRISTIAN IN RELATION TO ART AND LITERATURE.

And in this twofold sphere the twofold man
(And still the artist is intensely a man)
Holds firmly by the natural, to reach
The spiritual beyond it,—fixes still
The type with mortal vision, to pierce through,
With eyes immortal, to the antitype
Some called the ideal,—better called the real,
And certain to be called so presently
When things shall have their names.

E. B. BROWNING.

AT the beginning of this book I said that the great characteristic of a true Christian was *vitality*. A Christian is one who is intensely alive. No faculty of his nature lies dormant or unused. All his powers and sensibilities are awake. *I am come*, said Jesus Christ, *that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*.

It follows that the sense of beauty, to which art

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responds, being an essential part of our nature, is to be cultivated and developed under a due sense of duty toward God. Such cultivation is indeed a part of true self-love. If the power of perceiving beauty is an element in the perfection of human nature, a Christian will not despise or neglect it, especially when he considers that the love of God for the world—that Divine insight which discerns its inner meaning and hidden loveliness—ought to find its counterpart in the soul of man. A Christian should be able to say—

The world's no blot for us,
Nor blank : it means intensely and means good :
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.¹

For the Incarnation of the Word, the central truth of the Christian creed, has given both to nature and to human life a new and mysterious significance. It implies at once the spiritual destiny of creation, and its capacity for revealing spiritual truth. Nor is it a matter of wonder that when once the Church grasped the deeper significance of its creed, art “flamed into higher life,” and was welcomed as a precious and noble gift to mankind. It was recognised that its special function is a spiritual one ; that its mission is to interpret a

¹ R. Browning, *Fra Lippo Lippi*.

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universe hallowed by the indwelling of Deity, and thus to minister to worship by testifying to the "kindness and presence" in nature of the Creator-Spirit of God. The function of the artist, in fact, is that of training his fellow-men in insight and reverence, by teaching them to see even in common things a revelation of grace and goodness, and by interpreting to them the word or message from God which nature is appointed to convey.

The faculty, then, to which art appeals is to be trained wisely and patiently, as an element necessary to the completeness of human character. But the broad consideration also suggests itself that Christians may claim as their own that great saying of the apostle, *All things are yours. All things are yours; . . . whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come.*"¹ The world! civilisation with its manifold gifts, art with its treasures of beauty; science with its ever-increasing stores of wisdom and its accumulation of power; literature opening to us "the inexhaustible wonders of the intellect and the character of man." The splendour and the glory of the world are the heritage of the children of God—for they have a spiritual side and may

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 22.

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minister to spiritual purposes. Art and literature in their noblest forms cannot fail to suggest lofty and spiritual conceptions of truth, beauty and goodness; they may kindle high and fruitful thought; they may, in a word, serve to advance among men the Kingdom of God by training that spirit of reverence which begins in wonder and ends in praise.

You've seen the world—
The beauty, and the wonder, and the power,
The shapes of things, their colours, lights, and shades,
Changes, surprises—and God made it all !¹

Now, the real function of art and literature, regarded as the teachers of ideal truth, and as aids to that perfect soundness of character which only comes from feeding upon truth and beauty, has never been better described than by Plato in a memorable passage of his *Republic*.

“Let our artists,” he says, “be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of beauty and grace; then will our youth dwell in the land of health, amid fair sights and sounds; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, will visit the eye and ear like a healthful breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul even in childhood

¹ R. Browning, *Fra Lippo Lippi*.

into harmony with the beauty of reason. . . . He who has received this true education of the inner being will most shrewdly perceive omissions or faults in art and nature; and with a true taste, while he praises and rejoices over and receives into his soul the good, and becomes noble and good, he will justly blame and hate the bad now in the days of his youth, before he is able to know the reason why; and when reason comes he will recognise and salute her as a friend with whom his education has made him long familiar.”¹

It may be justly objected to this passage that it tends to confuse moral with æsthetic training; it identifies too broadly the beautiful with the good, and growth in character with the development of taste. But at least Plato’s teaching lays down three important principles of education. For, first, he rightly insists that art has an ethical aspect—that there is a “right” and a “wrong” even in matters of taste and feeling, and that art works upon human character through *sense*—the very avenue by which moral temptations make their assault: *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.*² Secondly, Plato asserts that the

¹ *Republic*, pp. 401, B, foll. (Jowett’s translation).

² 1 St. John ii. 16.

faculty of perceiving beauty needs a careful and serious discipline from the earliest years of childhood onwards. He reminds us that a great responsibility rests upon parents and teachers in this matter. It may seem, for instance, a trivial question what pictures are placed in a child's nursery, by what beauties of colour or form he is habitually surrounded, by what sort of books he is trained to think, to observe, and to enjoy—how far, in fact, he is being taught the love of what is true, simple, and pure. This point has been raised and briefly discussed in a recent number of the *Century Magazine*. The writer of a short article on "The New Pace for Children" points out as a "noteworthy defect in the care of children" nowadays, "the lack of supervision of their intellectual food." Some parents are satisfied if they exclude from the nursery "the hungry wolf of 'yellow journalism'"; but few are wise and far-sighted enough to reflect on "the vapidness of much of the reading accessible to boys and girls—empty pabulum with a honeyed taste, but without the intellectual and moral nourishment needed by the growing child. And yet," adds the writer, "it is a truism that in the long run what we read we are," and he goes on to deplore that unlovely product

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of the last decade, "the newspaper reading child."¹ With what follows, touching the dangers of unrestricted reading of newspapers, I can only express my hearty agreement. But we must return to Plato, whose third point is the need of a censorship in matters of art and literature. In his ideal State, poets and artists are to be prevented from injuring the cause of culture by feeding the imagination of the citizens with unworthy objects. They are, he says, to be "required to express the image of the good in their works, and restrained from exhibiting the forms of vice, intemperance, meanness, and indecency" under penalty of expulsion from the community. It is obvious that such a censorship in these days can only be effectually exercised by the enlightened conscience of individual Christians, who need to have their different organs of spiritual and moral perception trained by careful discipline to discriminate between what is noble and base.² Hence the importance of appreciating aright the heritage of art and literature that has descended to us. Most people are let loose to find their way among the great products of art without the necessary training. It needs an

¹ *The Century* for December, 1901, p. 315.

² Cp. Heb. v. 14.

uncommon patience and humility to study, as they deserve to be studied, those masterpieces in art or literature which the judgment of the ages has sealed with its approval. In fact, we need a systematic training in enjoyment.¹ Insight can only be developed by attentiveness, and by submitting patiently to the impression made on the mind by works of acknowledged beauty and grandeur. And what is true of art is true also of nature. It has been well said that "in one way or another our attentiveness must match Nature's expressiveness before we shall have learned to read the intelligence that she reveals."² The Christian looks upon "the world" as a part of his heritage, but he recognises that he must contemplate it with a humble, open, and teachable mind; not in the temper of mis-timed criticism, but in the spirit of reverence, patience, and faith.

In the practical conduct of life, however, a Christian is beset by two dangers.

There is, first, the tendency—not an imaginary one—to set art and literature in the place of religion. There is such a thing as the idolatry of

¹ See B. Bosanquet's essay on "Training in Enjoyment," in *The Civilization of Christendom*.

² *Ibid.*

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beauty ; certain phases of the renaissance in Italy illustrate both its reality as a power in human life, and the inevitable degeneracy of morals to which it leads. There is, too, the dilettante religion of the merely literary man—"the religion of great books and great thinkers, the religion of genius and poetic truth." There is the habit of mind which draws a disparaging contrast between Hellenism, with its spontaneity, its exuberance, its buoyant sense of "the wild joys of living," and Hebraism, with its seriousness, its moral intensity, its haunting sense of spiritual realities. There are minds which, while they welcome the declaration, *All things are yours*, forget the sense of responsibility under which they are to be used and enjoyed : *Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's*.

More common, however, is the danger of a false standard in art and literature—which tends to make them a source rather of weakness and corruption than of health and spiritual power. There is art that appeals merely to *the lust of the eyes* ; beauty wrongly so called because it is lacking in spirituality and truth ; literature which panders to what is mean, base, or disordered in human nature. And the art of discrimination—the tact which chooses the good and refuses the vile—cannot be

taught ; it cannot be embraced in a code of rules or precepts ; it depends on the careful training of the faculties both of *moral* and *æsthetic perception*. We must not allow average opinion to usurp the function of conscience. A book is not to be read or admired merely because it happens to make a stir and to be "in great demand." In some cases we may profitably remember that "the choice of a subject is a revelation of the artist ;"¹ and that there are subjects which are morally unsuitable for artistic treatment. In this connection we need to have a right conception of "Reality." The New Testament speaks as if the only "real" things in the universe were those which belong to the world of spirit. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, for instance, the words "true," "heavenly," "spiritual," are virtually synonymous. The material universe presents only the shadow, the suggestion, the symbol of ideal truth and beauty. And if this be our point of view, the true "realist" will not be he who merely depicts the external form or incident as it appears to the eye of the ordinary observer, but he who (in Ruskin's words) devotes himself to the "constant, patient, and humble rendering of actual models, accompanied

¹ Bp. Westcott.

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with that earnest mental study of each which can interpret all that is written upon it.”¹ In other words, the function of the true artist is to *interpret*; he strives to reveal to others that which his own keener insight discerns in typical scenes, faces, incidents, characters; he teaches them to see, even amid the sordid “realities” of life, glimpses of a fairer and brighter world; to his delineation of objects exactly as they are perceived by the eyes of average men, it is his peculiar task to

add the gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the poet's dream.²

If art and literature be studied in the Christian spirit, if the rule furnished by St. Paul (Phil. iv. 8) be taken as a practical principle of choice and conduct—the creations of the artist, the poet, the dramatist, the novelist, will minister to the completeness and serviceableness of a life *thoroughly furnished unto all good works*.³

¹ *Modern Painters*, part iii., sec. i., ch. xiv. In the preceding chapter Mr. Ruskin speaks of “that unfortunate distinction between Idealism and Realism which leads most people to imagine the Ideal opposed to the Real, and therefore *false*.” Cp. Lilly, *Right and Wrong*, chap. x.

² W. Wordsworth, *Elegiac Stanzas*.

³ 2 Tim. iii. 17.

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One word in conclusion.

Completeness of character, at least in the Christian sense of the word, implies the conjunction of *grace* with *life*. If "life" includes the fulfilment of duty, loyalty to conscience, the love of God and the service of man, "grace" is that indefinable gift which so touches "things common" that they rise "to touch the spheres;" it is that inborn sense of beauty which finds in music and art the noblest and most seemly aids to worship. Where these two elements are severed, we find a character unequally developed. Where they are fitly blended, we see human life lifted to its highest level, inasmuch as it has learned in the school of Christian faith and endeavour

To have to do with nothing but the true,
The good, the eternal—and these, not alone
In the main current of the general life,
But small experiences of every day,
Concerns of the particular hearth and home :
To learn not only by a comet's rush,
But a rose's birth,—not by the grandeur, God—
But the comfort, Christ.¹

¹ R. Browning, *The Ring and the Book*, vi.

THE END.

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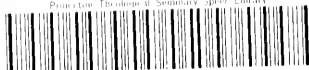
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